

THE RAPTURE PLOT



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by
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SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

After several printings, multiple orders for a thousand or more copies, scads of grateful letters, and praise-filled reviews in leading publications and on the Internet, *The Rapture Plot* is more alive and well on planet earth than ever before.

And I'm more than grateful. After all, it's my most complete and most documented book on the Scottish beginnings of the famous "any-moment, pretribulation rapture" — the 1830 imaginative addition to what had previously been known as only the "Second Coming" doctrine.

True, there have been a few rhubarbs as well as raves, but the back cover of this book includes some of those who've helped to turn the rhubarbs into rhubarb pie!

I'm totally grateful to Millennium III Publishers and team in South Carolina; their excellent editing, promotion, and marketing have been indispensable. My Rocky Mountain skies "are not cloudy *all day*"!

May the Lord be praised for allowing me to share my three decades of research with all of you!

— DAVE MACPHERSON
April 2000



PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This is a book about *trust*.

When I was a Boy Scout back in the 1940's, we would recite what a Scout should be. Being trustworthy was always listed ahead of other qualities.

Trust has always been important. A married person

wants a partner he or she can trust. We all want doctors, lawyers, investment experts, mechanics, and others on whom we can rely. And political and religious leaders in whom we can have confidence.

But no one can see into the future. The best way we can estimate future performance is to examine past performance. Unlike the future, the past is a tangible and finished record. When a government wants to hire someone for a top security position, nothing in the past is overlooked.

This is also a book about Bible prophecy. I'll be specific. It's the most complete analysis of the beginning of Protestant evangelicalism's most popular and most lucrative view of the future. Theologically, it's "the any-moment, pretribulation rapture view" — the most important ingredient in a system known as dispensationalism.

Is defense of a particular prophetic view or doctrine the same as defending the Bible as a whole? Well, hardly. If we believe that the Bible is trustworthy and that God had only one coherent end-time view in mind when He inspired and superintended the assembling of the Scriptures, we can believe this even if the Word is silent or purposely unclear on certain end-time details.

Prophetic disagreement has often come about when an interpreter has read only his imagination into such "mystery passages." Or when he has first assumed a view and only later fished around for "proof" even though he's known that clear passages contradict his "proof." If such deviousness could never happen, II Corinthians 4:2 would never warn against "handling the word of God deceitfully"!

So how can we know if a Bible interpreter is deliberately dishonest and not merely mistaken? How can we know which prophetic view is the right one? The answer, already given, is to analyze past performance.

Credit for the pretrib rapture idea has usually been given to one of two British sects of the early 1800's. During the last half of the last century, scholars uniformly credited

someone connected to the first group; during the present century, pretrib defenders have credited someone in the second group.

I know of only two other writers who've been thoroughly familiar with the earliest documents of these groups. Since both writers have been part of the second group and have distorted what the first group taught, I now reveal, with no bias and with much new data, how the pretrib rapture really began.

And as a highlight I will also unveil, for the first time, what has escaped all other researchers: my recent discovery of a plot in the late 1800's to cleverly revise what had long been accepted as the true account of pretrib development. In fact, many prophecy books don't even mention the plotter!

I John 2:21 says that "no lie is of the truth." If someone will knowingly distort history, should we trust his Biblical interpretations? (If your grocer deliberately sold rotten fish, you'd probably find another grocer!) But most 20th century prophecy writers can't be blamed; they've merely trusted the conclusions of others — all evidently unaware of a certain revisionist!

The purpose of this book is not to share my personal views of the future. My only focus is the past which, if analyzed with care, will help to resolve differences on the rapture, the tribulation, and the millennium.

Finally, I view all those with whom I disagree as fellow Christians. And I have found much value and inspiration in the earliest pretrib writings including John Darby's. Many of the earliest developers, however, had a weakness: the desire to be admired as an originator of new prophetic concepts. (But which one of us doesn't have at least one weakness?)

Without further ado, allow me to raise the curtain and present the never-before-revealed story of *The Rapture Plot*.

— DAVE MACPHERSON

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the library staffs at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey; Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas for supplying me with photocopies of 19th century British documents that I needed for this work.

I am also grateful to the librarians, Vee Carroll and Oleen Hatch, at the San Juan County Library in Monticello, Utah for obtaining for me numerous books through various inter-library loan systems.

And I cannot overlook the kindness and hospitality of Dwight and Linda Rogers of Monticello, Utah, who put in a plug for my electric typewriter which made *The Rapture Plot* even more electrifying.

I would be a colossal ingrate if I failed to mention those who over the years have helped and encouraged my wife, Wanda, and myself in countless ways. They are: Don and Alice Benson, Joseph Canfield, George and Minnie Derby, Livy Freeman, Florence Goddard, Julius Hornstra, Richard and Darlene Kylo, C. S. and Marjorie Lovett, William and June Lowe, Annette MacPherson, Bruce and Nancy MacPherson, Dick and Mae Miller, Gordon Mohr, George and Adaire Monta, John and Harriet Muehlberg, Harold and Betty Rader, Fred and Donna Shuss, Steve and Wanda Stouffer, Robert Van Kampen, Emma Moore Weston, John Williamson,

Speed and Ruth Wilson, and Richard and Jean Young.

Finally, this would be incomplete if I failed to mention the kindness and guidance of certain individuals, including Thomas Williamson of Chicago, associated with Millennium III Publishers.

I PREVIEW

I'll never forget the year 1993.

Early in the year I stumbled across solid evidence of a 19th century plot in Great Britain. A clever plot to cover up the *real* beginnings of the famous, fund-raising pretribulation rapture view of the second coming.

This has been evangelicalism's most popular interpretation of the future, the escapist belief that has been successfully employed by Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, mega-author Hal Lindsey, and many others.

With decades of research into end-things already under my belt, I had found myself going over an article published in a British theological journal in 1890. The writer, a leading figure in what I'll call Group B, was supposedly analyzing the early prophetic beliefs of another British group (I'll call it Group A) that had appeared on the scene at about the same time as his own group.

It was no secret that Group B had long wanted credit for this pretribulation (pretrib) belief even though it hadn't deserved it.

At the article's end, the same writer included four paragraphs from what he said was Group A's "most authoritative document" explaining its prophetic views, a document first published in the 1830's and later reprinted in an 1878 work.

While I was reading these quoted paragraphs, bells of warning seemed to ring in my head. Something was terribly

wrong. This was hardly the Group A that had become as familiar as my own family!

As soon as I began comparing the 1890 version of the document with the 1878 version, which faithfully copied the original, I was shocked to discover that this British writer had chopped off the last half of the last sentence. Not only did the deleted half of this sentence capably demonstrate Group A's belief in a pretrib rapture, but the very next paragraph (also deleted) taught the same idea even more clearly!

Later on I'll reveal the plotter's name and the quotes he covered up. (One can see reflections of his techniques in some of today's leading prophecy writers.) But first, in order to show what led to the plot, we must look at prophetic unfolding in the British Isles several decades earlier.

All of my major writings over the years have demonstrated that various individuals in Group A taught the pretrib view before anyone in Group B did.

Group A consisted of London preacher Edward Irving and his followers (Irvingites), and also included those who influenced them. After some serious clashes with officials of his own Presbyterian denomination (he was eventually deposed on charges of heresy), Irving organized what became known as the Catholic Apostolic Church, an independent and charismatic group in Britain.

One person whose prophetic views greatly influenced Irving and his friends was Miss Margaret Macdonald, a young lassie living in the small shipbuilding town of Port Glasgow in western Scotland. (Port Glasgow shouldn't be confused with the large city of Glasgow, 15 miles to the east.) Several of my books dealt extensively with her background and view.¹

Group B can refer to no other group than the Britain-based Brethren, often called the Plymouth Brethren by outsiders. Its most influential prophecy teacher was John Nelson

¹Including *The Incredible Cover-up* (Logos International, 1975; Omega Publications, 1980) and *The Great Rapture Hoax* (New Puritan Library, 1983).

Darby. His followers have been labeled Darbyites or Darbyists.

The Lassie's Revelation

During springtime in 1830, an end-time vision sprang into Margaret Macdonald's mind. Privately she sent handwritten copies of her Scripture-riddled revelation to some leading clergymen including Irving.

I now pause for the following thought from best-selling author Hal Lindsey: I mean his discussion of "the one taken and the other left" before "THE WICKED be revealed" based on Matthew 24:40-41 and II Thessalonians 2:8.

Since Lindsey's *New World Coming* ties in a pretrib rapture with the "one taken," and since his book *The Rapture* has the same rapture occurring before "THE WICKED" (or Antichrist) is revealed, Lindsey thus equates the "one taken" of Matthew 24 with II Thessalonians 2:7's "taken out of the way" — "taken" being the key word here.²

Yes, "the one taken and the other left" before "THE WICKED be revealed" is Lindsey's thought, and his readers recognize it as the bare minimum for a pretrib rapture.

But these words, in the same order, appear in lines 58-63 in Margaret's 1830 revelation! And my writings emphasize that this was her *most important* point.

Since Margaret had been ill and bedridden for a year and a half before her revelation, she'd had plenty of time to read and ponder the Scriptures. She noticed that something happens after Matthew 24:40's "taken" as well as after II Thessalonians 2:7's "taken." Putting the two passages together, she reasoned that only after the rapture, when some would be left on earth, would the Antichrist be revealed.

After all, if some could literally be taken out of the way

²Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming* (Vision House Publishers, 1973), p. 82; *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (Bantam Books, 1983), p. 139.

(via rapture) while others could be left on earth for something less desirable, was it unreasonable to tie together Matthew's taking away with II Thessalonians' taking out of the way?

Evidently no one in the 18 centuries preceding her had ever taken on these two "takens," tied them together, and introduced this totally new escapism which many have taken up (and been taken up with) since 1830.

My critics, wishing to credit Darby and discredit Margaret, have also known the importance of her main point. Which is why two of John Walvoord's books, when discussing my research, quote nothing in her revelation!³

And which is why Thomas Ice, in his recent journal article, quotes up to line 55 in her 117-line revelation, skips over the crucial lines (58-63), and resumes quoting in line 72!⁴

And which is why Hal Lindsey's *The Rapture* muddies up her main point (the point he himself promotes); his analysis has her teaching that spiritual Christians will be raptured *and* enduring the tribulation (which then becomes half of the tribulation) — all of which proves that she was a posttrib, according to him!⁵

Persons wishing to read Margaret's important revelation, which soon resulted in the takeover of some other minds, can find it in Appendix B or in my earlier books including *The Incredible Cover-up* and *The Great Rapture Hoax*. In addition to Lindsey's *The Rapture*, it also appears in works⁶ such

³John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), pp. 42-48; *The Rapture Question: Revised* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), pp. 151-155.

⁴Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Apr.-June, 1990), pp. 158-160.

⁵Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture*, pp. 172-173.

⁶William R. Kimball, *The Rapture: A Question of Timing* (Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 44-47.

as William Kimball's *The Rapture*.

One can find it even in publications coming from the non-evangelical press such as *Endtime: The Doomsday Catalog* compiled by William Griffin, a senior editor at Macmillan Publishing Company; Griffin began his "Rapture" section with *The Incredible Cover-up's* reproduction of Margaret's epic revelation.⁷

And countless other books and articles, including articles in various encyclopedias, have discussed her contribution. Fortunately for me, the majority has agreed with my conclusions.

Incidentally, the rapture view featured in the present book did not spring from "tongues," as some have assumed. Margaret didn't speak in "tongues" until several months after her key revelation. The following chapter fully analyzes the development of her views.

Early Cover-ups

If any belief has had a charmed life, it's the pretribulation rapture view. From its earliest days its true birth and beginning development have been kept hidden by not a few "nannies." A failure of the early detection of this cover-up has prevented many theological "doctors" from being able to give the subject effective treatment.

It would be hard to prove, as some have charged, that a dark, unseen force had a direct hand in bringing about the creation of this end-time system. But not so hard to imagine that, after the emergence of this school of interpretation, the same opportunistic force could easily find reasons for nurturing and exploiting it while hiding its origin.

Long before the existence of a deliberate plot in the late 1800's to twist historical facts, circumstances in the early 1830's began paving the way for the later revisionism.

⁷William Griffin, *Endtime: The Doomsday Catalog* (Macmillan Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 74-76.

Undoubtedly Margaret's revelation was the most newsworthy, radically different story during that tell-a-vision period. But the Scottish newspapers ignored it. Instead they featured front-page articles on the accompanying revival of charismatic gifts because, although such gifts were hardly new, reports of miraculous healing and tongues-speaking were guaranteed to draw the attention of their readers.⁸

So while it was still sucking its pacifier, pretrib lost round one in publicity!

As early as June 2, 1830, Edward Irving confessed in a private letter that the "substance of . . . Margaret Macdonald's visions or revelations . . . carry to me a spiritual conviction and a spiritual reproof which I cannot express."⁹

When news of miracles in the Scottish revival began reaching the outside world during the summer of 1830, Irvingites and others traveled to Port Glasgow and vicinity to investigate the phenomena. Some of the investigators were writers for various publications including Irving's prophetic journal *The Morning Watch*. All of the visitors, except one, later demonstrated that they knew that Margaret's pretrib view was the *central theme* of the utterances.

The visitor who was aware of her central theme, but chose to cover up his knowledge of it (for reasons I'll reveal later), was John Darby of the Brethren!

As noted, Irving had been unable or unwilling in June to express the lassie's concept. But things soon changed.

As early as the September 1830 issue of *The Morning Watch*, a writer using the pen name of "Fidus" clearly expressed her novel idea — the earliest moment I've found anyone publicly teaching the pretrib rapturescape.

⁸See, for example, "The Gareloch Miracles" (*Edinburgh Scotsman*, June 2, 1830) and "The Row Heresy and Gairloch Miracles" (*Glasgow Herald*, June 18, 1830). Note "Gareloch"/"Gairloch" variation.

⁹Mrs. [Margaret O. W.] Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865), p. 293. On p. 290 she also spoke of a "new revelation" in western Scotland in 1830.

But the same writer gave the Port Glasgow lass no credit because she had four strikes against her:

She was a female.

She was young.

She was uneducated.

She'd been a Christian only a year.

Any one of these would have been reason enough for the male-dominated theological world of 1830 to pretend she didn't exist. And so even in September of the same year, many Britishers still didn't know how pretrib had really begun.

Whatever you want to blame — male chauvinism, British eccentricity, the Irvingites' penchant for secrecy, or something else — the effect was the same and the young Scottish woman was again denied her place in the sun which, in those days, never set on the British Empire.

The First Public Teaching

Even well-informed British readers might have found themselves choking on their morning tea when reading *The Morning Watch* for September 1830. The article by "Fidus" (second in a series) which could have affected one's digestion featured his application of the seven churches of the book of Revelation to seven successive stages of the church era.

But this, in itself, wasn't unusual. Theologians had long seen such connections even though there had been variations in the applications.

By 1825 Irving was toying with this theory in one of his letters: "It almost tempts me to think more of the idea that these seven Churches are emblems of the seven ages of the Christian Church, to the last of which men are now arrived."¹⁰

Apparently Irving then felt what others had been concluding: they had been living in the "Philadelphia" period

¹⁰Irving's November 25, 1825 letter to his wife Isabella, as quoted in Oliphant's *The Life of Edward Irving*, p. 185.

and the future and final “Laodicea” period, just before the Second Advent, was about to begin or had just begun.

The first installment of the continuing “Fidus” article had appeared in the previous June issue. In it he had written that “*five . . . of these eras have already come to pass*” and that “*Laodicea . . . is yet future.*” Obviously he believed he was then in the “Philadelphia” period. Since he looked for only a coming just before Christ’s “millennial reign,” he saw neither “Philadelphia” nor “Laodicea” raptured away before the final Advent.¹¹

But what a mind-blowing change when “Fidus” again took up his pen for the September issue — the issue that helped to create the long-standing rapture issue! His interpretation of the seven churches added an *entirely new* event and resembled later modified-historicist interpretations coming from C. I. Scofield and Hal Lindsey!¹²

Historicism, as compared with *futurism*, had long viewed the well-known 1260 days of the tribulation as 1260 *years*, years that many had predicted would end in the mid-1800’s. After a revival of futurism early in the 19th century, some began predicting a future tribulation of 1260 *days*. Because of this change, some theologians of that era no longer saw themselves living during the tribulation period of the book of Revelation, as all the historicists had formerly believed. Instead, they thought they were in an earlier portion: the latter part of the “seven churches” period which precedes the tribulation period.

With a photocopy of the September 1830 “unveiling” in front of me, I now present the doctrine-changing words of “Fidus” as found in his article entitled “Commentary on the

¹¹“Fidus,” “Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse,” Part I (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1830), pp. 266, 270, 272.

¹²C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1917), pp. 1332-1334; Hal Lindsey, *There’s A New World Coming*, pp. 47, 51, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71.

Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse.”¹³

See how quickly you can spot a pretrib rapture in his words as found in *The Morning Watch*:

“1. The Ephesian church carries us down to the commencement of the great persecution by Nero, in A.D. 64.

2. That of Smyrna represents the church purified by trial at the hands of Rome, till the accession of Constantine, in 324.

3. The church at Pergamos sets forth the interval between the elevation of Constantine and the rise of the little horn, at the commencement of the 1260 years.

4. The church at Thyatira expresses the testimony of the church against the Papacy during the 1260 years.

5. That of Sardis indicates the state of the church from the end of the 1260 years, until the preparation for the coming of the Lord.

6. The Philadelphian church expresses the period of that preparation, until the Lord come to the air, and be met by his saints changed and risen.

7. The Laodicean church (the only one yet entirely future) is our sad monitor concerning the history of the church on earth during that period of great tribulation which shall intervene between the coming of the Lord to the air and the establishment of his throne and rest in Zion.”¹⁴

Note that in his seventh paragraph “Fidus” appropriated Margaret Macdonald’s “additive” (“the coming of the Lord to the air”) and, like her, placed it *before* the time of Antichrist (“that period of great tribulation”) — a combination never

¹³In addition to leading British libraries, original issues of *The Morning Watch* are in Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Oral Roberts University, Princeton Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. (These issues have been in the Princeton library since 1925.)

¹⁴“Fidus,” “Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse,” Part II (*The Morning Watch*, September 1830), p. 510.

before seen in public print! No one before 1830 had ever dreamed of separating the “caught up” of I Thessalonians 4 from the “gather” of Matthew 24, let alone dared to create an even bigger gap and suggest a rapture before the end-time tribulation!

It would be interesting to discover the identity of the “Fidus” who was the first one to publicly teach pretrib. Not even the sources in the world famous British Museum Library have been able to reveal his real name.

The No. 1 Critic

It’s fitting right here to give the platform to R. A. Huebner. The chief critic of my research, he’s been described by *Moody Monthly* as a “militant” member of the (Darbyist) Brethren.

Because Huebner is as familiar as I am with primary sources such as *The Morning Watch*, leading pretrib defenders from Walvoord to LaHaye have leaned so heavily on his 1973 or 1991 books he’s almost been their noisy ghostwriter.¹⁵

After extensive quotation of this Irvingite journal (and consistently getting close to a lot a *clear* pretrib teaching in it but by-passing it all!), Huebner’s 1973 title concluded that the “Irvingites (1828-1834) never held the pretribulation rapture”¹⁶ (The above “grand opening” by “Fidus” was just one item that he had passed over.)

After charges of being purposely choosy while quoting (his main aim has been to credit Darby and discredit others), Huebner finally reproduced, in his 1991 book, paragraphs 4 through 7 in the above “Fidus” contribution.¹⁷

Huebner then wrote that “Fidus” referred to “that pe-

¹⁵R. A. Huebner, *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (Present Truth Publishers, 1973); *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby* (Present Truth Publishers, 1991).

¹⁶R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 74.

¹⁷R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 195.

riod of great tribulation" which Huebner interpreted as "evidently the pouring out of the seventh vial." He added, with emphasis, that "he did not call it '*the* great tribulation.'"¹⁸

Probably Huebner's readers were again unaware how close his state of the art had come to the state of the matter. Three pages later "Fidus" had lengthy, explanatory paragraphs on the last two of the seven churches. I now quote what Huebner omitted:

"Fidus" wrote that "Philadelphia" is the church

which is characterized by the earnest yet patient expectation of the Lord; which receives the answer of its faith in being caught up to meet him; which is thus kept from the hour of temptation; and which so becomes, not Laodicea chastised in love, but the victorious ministerer of the great tribulation (Rev. ii. 24, 26; iii. 10; Luke xxi. 36; Heb. xi. 5).

On the same page "Fidus" depicted "Laodicea" as:

the last and dying stage of the Gentile church, before the gathering of the Jews shall give it life from the dead (Rom. xi. 15): we see the imminency, the terrors, the earthquake convulsions of the great tribulation . . .¹⁹

The score: 2 for "the great tribulation," and 0 for "the seventh vial."

Hal Lindsey follows in the footsteps of "Fidus." His *New World Coming* applies the tribulation to only "Laodicea" while fortunate "Philadelphia" is seen raptured before that period.²⁰

Likewise, John Walvoord sees only "Philadelphia," and not you-know-who, getting a promised "thumbs up" and "all systems go" for a pretrib blastoff.²¹

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁹"Fidus", "Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse," Part II (*The Morning Watch*, Sep. 1830), p. 514.

²⁰Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming*, pp. 67, 71.

²¹John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Moody Press, 1966), p. 87.

Thus far we've observed the public airing of Margaret's pretrib thoughts (with "Fidus" getting credit) in September of 1830.

At the same time — surprise! — Brethren leader John Darby was anything but a pretrib. My critics deny this, claiming he believed in a pretrib rapture as early as 1827. This is believable if they carelessly or deliberately overlook his historicism-defending article in the December 1830 *Christian Herald*, included in his *Collected Writings*.

Darby ended it by saying he expected to be "caught up to meet Him in the air" just before the "judging of the nations" — a posttrib judgment beginning in Matthew 25:31, according to Scofield.²²

The only thing more sensational than the new escapist view was the speed with which it was publicly introduced. No more than a few weeks had elapsed between the late-summer, on-the-scene interviewing of Margaret and the public viewing of her innovation!

Some questions are now before us:

When later 19th century writers had occasion to discuss the earliest development of the pretrib rapture view, which person or persons did they pinpoint?

Did they continue to withhold credit from Margaret Macdonald?

Who received credit throughout the last century for the first *public* teaching of this view — someone in the Irvingite circle or someone in the Brethren circle?

One of the most overlooked facets of 19th-century eschatological history has been the discussion of pretrib's earliest "pedigree" by writers of the same period. Because these writers had been alive during this doctrine's groundbreaking and maturation, their conclusions, which follow, are valuable.

²²J. N. Darby, "On 'Days' Signifying 'Years' in Prophetic Language," *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, Prophetic No. 1 (Bible Truth Publishers, 1971 reprint), p. 40.

Some Early Clues

One can go through my collection of photocopies of everything in *The Morning Watch* 1829-1833 — 3993 pages — and find little reference to, and certainly no credit for, Margaret Macdonald.

But an unidentified writer, who most likely was mentally including this lassie, revealed the following in the December 1832 issue:

The Spirit of God has caused several young women, in different parts of Great Britain, to condense into a few broken sentences more and deeper theology than ever Vaughan, Chalmers, or Irving uttered in their longest sermons; and therefore more than all the rest of the Evangelical pulpits ever put forth in the whole course of their existence.²³

In 1833, after he had joined the Irvingites, accepted their beliefs, and then had become disillusioned and left them, British lawyer Robert Baxter issued his *Narrative of Facts*. This is one of the earliest works giving some details on the pretrib origin.²⁴

Baxter revealed that “the delusion first appeared in Scotland” and that “it was not until adopted and upheld by Mr. Irving, that it began to challenge much attention . . .” “An opinion had been advanced in some of Mr. Irving’s writings,” he wrote, “that before the second coming of Christ, and before . . . the *day of vengeance* . . . the saints would be caught up to heaven . . .” The “day of vengeance,” he explained, would begin with the arrival of “the *man of sin* . . .” His book concluded that “there must have been much error, in our

²³“Unaccomplished Prophecies Now Fulfilling” (No. III) (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1832), p. 249. Others that the writer had in mind probably included Margaret’s friend Mary Campbell, and Emily Cardale in Irving’s London church.

²⁴Robert Baxter, *Narrative of Facts, Characterizing the Supernatural Manifestations in Members of Mr. Irving’s Congregation* etc. (London: James Nisbet, 1833).

view of the manner and circumstances of the coming of the Lord, or we could not have been so deceived.”²⁵

The year 1840 saw what apparently was the first published reproduction of Margaret’s most important revelation. It appeared in *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow*, basically a biography of her older brothers. The author, Robert Norton, had long been a friend of the family and had recorded the lassie’s revelations while she had uttered them. Later he became a leading Irvingite historian.

Although Norton publicly aired her pretrib revelation, he gave her no credit — evidently the accepted practice at that time if the author of a private revelation was still living.²⁶

Mid-Century Voices

The middle of the 19th century arrived. Britain still had Brethren and Irvingites. Both groups had eccentricities: the Brethren could be “exclusive” while the Irvingites were reclusive. Both were still tiny sects. And both continued to promote pretrib doctrine.

And there were persons in both groups who still knew how this latter-day novelty had arisen.

The most eminent Brethren scholar of the same century was Samuel P. Tregelles. In an 1855 article in *The Christian Annotator* he wrote, in harmony with long-standing tradition, that the true Christian hope is the final “advent” and “not some secret advent, or secret rapture to the Lord, as Judaisers had supposed might be the case”²⁷

In 1861 Robert Norton again published Margaret’s pretrib vision. The first words in his book were these:

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 31, 141, 143.

²⁶Robert Norton, *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow* (London: John F. Shaw, 1840), pp. 171-176.

²⁷S. P. Tregelles, “Premillennial Advent” (*The Christian Annotator*, June 16, 1855), p. 190.

The work which God hath wrought in these last days . . . has been generally known, or rather has remained unknown, under the false designation of Irvingism; whereby its true origin and character have been hidden and misrepresented. The name of Edward Irving is worthy of perpetual remembrance and honour, inasmuch as he was the first minister who publicly recognised it; and he devoted his whole after life, with a martyr's self-sacrifice, to its maintenance and progress. But both he and his brethren in faith always have protested against this abuse of his name . . .²⁸

Several pages later Norton finally named Margaret as the one who had given the same 1830 revelation, the revelation he had first aired 21 years earlier without giving her credit. He added that this had been the "first" instance, as he put it, of the new doctrine.²⁹

Nine years after his earlier article, Tregelles' influential 1864 book *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming* finally revealed who the "Judaisers" were. He said that "the theory of a secret coming" was "first brought forward" by means of "an 'utterance' in Mr. Irving's Church" and that this occurred "about the year 1832."³⁰

R. A. Huebner, echoed by Walvoord and some others, claims that these two Tregelles works were contradictory, that the Irvingites couldn't have been the "Judaisers." He charges the outstanding scholar Tregelles with "untruth and slander."³¹

But even the one in the late 1800's who successfully plotted to cover up the real pretrib origin and pretrib's earliest development — even *he* admitted repeatedly that the Irvingites had been the "Judaisers." A later section will give abundant proof of this. But right here I'll share just a taste:

²⁸Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (London: Bosworth & Harrison, 1861), p. 1.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁰S. P. Tregelles, *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming* (Ambassadors for Christ, n.d. [1864]), pp. 34-35.

³¹R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, pp. 14-17; *Precious Truths*, pp. 153-156.

in one of his writings the plotter himself condemned “Judaizing” — Christians adopting “Jewish elements” — and he added that “nowhere is this so patent as in Irvingism”!

A Growing Chorus

In 1871 noted commentator John Peter Lange, well aware that Irvingism had conducted pretribism’s first public “unwrap session,” referred to “the Irvingite interpretation,” “the peculiar Irvingite exegesis,” “the Irvingite distinction,” “the Irvingite doctrine of the translation,” and “the Irvingite reference to the company of the chosen ones.”³²

The following year Thomas Croskery of Londonderry, Ireland wrote in an article: “. . . this idea of the Lord removing his Church secretly . . . was never heard of till it was proclaimed in one of the delusive utterances of the Irvingites in 1832.”³³

Edward Miller’s monumental 1878 work on Irvingite history credited the Irvingites with systematizing the “definite order of events” which featured Christians being “caught up to Him in the air” before “the great tribulation.” And he pointed out: “Dr. Norton had been intimately acquainted with the commencement of the movement in Scotland in the case of the Macdonalds”³⁴

The next year a book by Croskery³⁵ declared that the “curious doctrine of the ‘secret rapture’” — an event happening before “the rise of Antichrist and all the events of his reign” — “was first broached, as Dr. Tregelles says, at an Irvingite

³²John Peter Lange, *Commentary* (Chas. Scribner, 1871), “First Thessalonians,” p. 79; “Second Thessalonians,” pp. 130, 133, 139.

³³Thomas Croskery, “The Plymouth Brethren,” Art. III (*The Princeton Review*, Jan., 1872), pp. 61-62.

³⁴Edward Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1878), Vol. II, p. 8; Vol. I, pp. 277-278.

³⁵Thomas Croskery, *Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines* (London: William Mullan & Son, 1879), p. 138.

meeting" (Croskery mentioned that two of the most influential Brethren figures at that time were John Darby and William Kelly, both of whom were avidly promoting pretrib.)

In 1880 William Reid, in his book on Brethrenism, stated that "Edward Irving contributed the notion of . . . the secret rapture of the saints."³⁶

An 1885 issue of *The Contemporary Review*, an American journal, featured an article on Darby by George Stokes that contained more insightful detail on early development.³⁷

He included the following sketch of Edward Irving:

The men of this generation have very little idea of the vast influence exercised by the weird, majestic eloquence, the seer-like utterances, the colossal person of the famous Scotch preacher. Ministers of State, noblemen, theologians, literary men, all ranks and conditions of society, were led captive by him. His teaching, which was closely modelled upon the style of the old Hebrew prophets, dealt very largely with the subject of unfulfilled prophecy and the speedy manifestation of the Second Advent of Christ. Irving infected his hearers with his views and expectations. Meeting for the study of prophecy became the fashion.³⁸

On the next page Stokes threw some light on Darby's early ministry in Ireland: "He was for some time curate of Calary, the next parish to Powerscourt, where he imbibed the Irvingite theories about prophecy"³⁹

Stokes concluded on the following page: "From Irving, then, Darby derived his prophetic system, which became one of the most prominent features of his system, and one of the rocks, too, on which that system was rent asunder."⁴⁰

As late as 1899 J. S. Teulon's history of the Brethren

³⁶William Reid, *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* (Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphant & Co., 1880), p. 10.

³⁷George T. Stokes, "John Nelson Darby" (*The Contemporary Review*, Oct., 1885).

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 543.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 544.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 545.

admitted that some of what the early Brethren had taught had also been taught “under the auspices of Edward Irving in London.”⁴¹

The tally so far: Brethren as well as non-Brethren crediting someone in *Irving's* circle with the pretribulation rapture!

Logical Conclusions

1. If Lindsey can see “one taken” before the revealing of Antichrist, and others can view this as a pretrib thought, then Margaret Macdonald should also be classified as a pretrib since she expressed the same order of events during the spring of 1830.

2. If Scofield, Lindsey, Walvoord, and other pretrib leaders express pretrib when they see “Philadelphia” raptured and “Laodicea” left on earth for the tribulation, then “Fidus” was also teaching pretrib when he said the same thing in *The Morning Watch* in September of 1830.

3. If Scofield can view the judgment of the nations as a posttrib event, then Darby was posttrib in his December 1830 *Christian Herald* article which tied in the only coming he looked for with the same judgment. Objective scholarship knows that Darby’s hazy and even contradictory reminiscences decades later can never substitute for his earliest published words. Even his early private letters that have been preserved are more valuable than his later recollections.

4. If Huebner, upheld by popularizers from Walvoord to LaHaye, can have a working knowledge of the earliest primary documents and can consistently, while desiring to credit Darby, come within a few pages (or even a few sentences!) of *clear* pretrib teaching by Irvingites and by-pass it all, how reliable is he?

⁴¹J. S. Teulon, *The History and Teaching of the Plymouth Brethren* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1899), p. 11.

Coming Attractions

The goal during my decades-long research has been to unearth rare, original documents on pretrib beginnings. You will see evidence of them on later pages when you go over the most extensive quotation of the earliest Irvingite development. And this “royal treatment” will also include the most complete analysis ever undertaken of Darby’s earliest progress. You will discover that even the world of the occult influenced the Irvingites and the young Scottish lassie who inspired them! Also, proof that the Brethren had “skeletons” in their own closet!

You will find out that the plotter of the last century was very much aware of pretrib history and also knew what later 19th century scholars had written about it.

One of the plotter’s aims was to cover up the Irvingites’ (and Margaret’s) pretrib development while emphasizing, as a smoke screen, their unorthodox beliefs and practices.

His other aim was to give his own group credit for the rapture-before-tribulation doctrine. He did this by exaggerating the pretrib development of his favorite teacher and by deftly concealing his own group’s “dirty linen”!

Before you turn to the next chapter, look at Appendix A in the back of this book. You’ll be shocked to learn that Huebner’s influential books have *hundreds* of copying errors when quoting various sources, errors resulting at times in false analyses and conclusions!

Not only have today’s leading prophecy writers copied Huebner’s miscopying, but they’ve added many of their own copying errors! One of them carelessly omitted the incredible total of 48 *words* when reproducing Margaret Macdonald’s 1830 revelation — the same 48 words that another leader had omitted three years earlier!

By the time you reach my last page, you may find yourself agreeing that the present research “hound” has not been barking up the wrong 19th century tree!

II

THE SCOTTISH LASSIE

Phil Bunton is a transplanted Scotsman here in America who's currently the editorial director of Globe Communications, publisher of *Globe*, *Sun*, and *National Examiner*. He was asked why British reporters and editors have long dominated the top positions of the bizarre tabloids sold in American supermarkets.

His answer: "I think Brits have a talent that has died out in this country, a talent to sensationalize, to give the audience what it wants."¹

This British trait is hardly new. It showed its face throughout the 1800's, the century that saw the British inventing and promulgating various new theories including the theory of evolution with its idea of the "survival of the fittest."

In the theological realm, the 19th century premillennial British could offer brand-new views including the "heavenly survival of the worthiest," while the rest of the elect, not worthy of a pretribulation rapture, would at the same time be left on earth to face the persecution of the final Antichrist.

This end-time view, radically unlike the prophetic views disseminated before 1830, is traced back to the same Margaret Macdonald (her biographer didn't capitalize the first "d"

¹Sue Hubbell, "Rare glimpse inside tabloid world reveals editor is mad dog!" (*Smithsonian*, Oct., 1993), p. 74.

in her last name). This ground-breaking Scottish lass is now a household name in Christian circles, thanks to numerous authors and editors whose works during the past two decades have reflected what Wheaton College professor Arthur Katterjohn in the 1970's called my "pioneer research."²

One of the most important sections in my 1983 book, *The Great Rapture Hoax*, was a 56-page appendix focusing on Margaret's key revelation of 1830. In it I analyzed all 117 lines of her account and painstakingly demonstrated that her distinctive ideas and terminology were soon echoed by Irvingite writers and even by Brethren leader John Darby in later years.

Some haven't had the opportunity — or time — to wade through the same lengthy appendix. This chapter will analyze, in rough outline form, her main emphases. You may be surprised to learn that she, too, borrowed from others!

Historicism's Influence

Historicism is the centuries-old system that was much more prevalent in the early 1800's than it is today. It was associated with the "year-day" theory which is commonly traced back to a Roman Catholic priest named Joachim who lived in Fiore, Italy during the 1100's.

²In addition to "reflectors" featured in the present book, other authors and editors include: William G. Lowe, J. Barton Payne, J. Grant Swank Jr., Arthur D. Katterjohn, Mark Fackler, Henry T. Hudson, William R. Crews, Clarence E. Mason Jr., Ian S. Rennie, Jose Grau, Carl E. Armerding, W. Ward Gasque, Paul Erb, J. Gordon Melton, James M. McKeever, Robert L. Pierce, Cornelis Vander waal, Anthony A. Hoekema, Timothy P. Weber, William Griffin, Robert H. Gundry, C. S. Lovett, Peggy L. Shriver, J. G. Fijnvandraat, H. P. Medema, Val J. Sauer, Desmond Ford, George W. Dollar, Richard R. Reiter, Walter A. Elwell, Robert G. Clouse, William R. Kimball, Martin E. Marty, Joseph M. Canfield, Gary DeMar, Peter J. Leithart, Robert W. Faid, Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., John Gilmore, H. Speed Wilson, Robert P. Lightner, Marvin J. Rosenthal, Willard A. Ramsey, Pat Brooks, John H. Gerstner, Robert Van Kampen, Paul Boyer, Gary North, Max S. Weremchuk, and Larry V. Crutchfield.

From the time of Christ, and even before, each week of Daniel's 70 weeks (Dan. 9:24) had often been viewed as seven years — a total of 490 years. Since each week equaled seven years, each day in each week was seen as an actual year.

But this year-day principle had a notable exception. We find that the earliest Christians viewed the 1260 days of the great tribulation (Rev. 12:6) as literal days and not years. For example, Irenaeus (140-220) wrote, concerning the Antichrist, that everything "shall be given into his hand . . . *for three years and six months*" — in other words, 1260 days.³

By the time of the 12th century, Joachim reasoned that since no previous 1260-day period during the Christian era had seemed to fulfill Revelation 12:6, and since the persecution of Christians by non-Christians had gone on for centuries, these days "designate nothing else than 1260 years."⁴

It was easy for him to apply the first beast of Revelation 13 to Jews, pagans, Arians, and Saracens (Moslems living during the Crusades) and the second beast to false prophets. But much harder for him and others to determine when the 1260 years had actually begun.

During and after the Reformation, Protestants applied these years to the long reign of the Papacy, which they viewed as the "Antichrist." Theologians of the early 1800's were generally agreed that the 1260 years had ended around 1792. (Hadh't the French Revolution's infidelity "wounded" the Papal "head," a la Revelation 13:3?) They also turned the additional 30 days and 45 days (Dan. 12:11-12) into years; the 30 ended around 1822 and the 45 will usher in the second advent in about 1867, they said.

But a revival of futurism (seeing a future, individual Antichrist during 1260 literal days) was also making the scene

³Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V, 25, 3 (Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1899f, Vol. 1, p. 554).

⁴Joachim of Fiore, *Book of the Harmony of the New and Old Testament* (Venetij's: Per Simonem de Luere, 1519), fol. 118.

in the early 1800's. Margaret's revelation had both historicist and futurist elements. But this wasn't unusual. Historicism itself had often combined these elements. Advocates wisely realized that if they claimed that *everything* preceding the Second Advent was already fulfilled, and then years went by with no Advent, the short-term gain (for themselves) wouldn't be worth the long-term depression (for their disillusioned followers).

On the other hand, if they viewed the advent as too far ahead, who could get excited? The trick was to get close enough to the advent to stimulate listeners. At the same time, they saved just enough of the latter portions of Revelation in their futurist "cupboard" to explain any sudden unforeseen world crisis. One had to get close enough to the fireplace to be warmed, but not close enough to be burned!

Overlapping Views

We've seen that normal historicism can embrace that which is said to be future. But when historicists of the last century began to be drawn to the concept of a future Antichrist, he was often seen as merely the *final* leader of the centuries-old Papacy.

In the same way that historicists of yesteryear couldn't be divorced from futurism, 20th century futurists such as C. I. Scofield and Hal Lindsey can't be divorced from historicism. Scofield declared that "apostate Christendom" will be "headed up under the Papacy" while Lindsey also sees an Antichrist headquartered in Rome.⁵

Today's futurism, influenced by the older historicism, can likewise see successive eras of the church in the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3, as previously noted.

If some could define "Antichrist" in a mystical or spiritual way (the Papal system), others could begin to literalize it

⁵C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1346, note 1; Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming*, p. 103.

(and see only an individual). And the reverse was also a possibility, going from the literal to the mystical. An example is the “man child” of Revelation 12:5 that is “caught up.” For centuries many theologians had said that this refers literally to Christ and His ascension. Readers may be shocked to learn that early dispensationalists changed this “literal” verse into a “mystical” one, seeing in it the rapture of the mystical body of Christ (the church) 1260 days before the second coming.

Going from one way of interpretation to another way often rested on what is known today as the “double fulfillment” principle. As early as 1829, the Irvingites called this principle “double action”: “There is in the Apocalypse a sort of double action — the first a sign and premonition of the second. . . .”⁶

Which Chapter?

You may be wondering which chapter in the book of Revelation prophecy experts felt was being fulfilled during the first three decades of the last century. As noted, many thought that the French Revolution had fulfilled the 1260 days (interpreted as years) of Revelation 12, and that the “beastly” chapter of Revelation 13 had also run its course during the same period.

Since these theologians were looking for only the final advent in about the year 1867, they had to fit only five or six more Revelation chapters into the 75-year period between 1792 and 1867.

All set for this final countdown, they could find no better spot for viewing the coming advent’s “promised land” than the “Mt. Nebo” of Revelation 14, which chapter they said the church was then living in.

As early as 1813 Scottish leader William Cuninghame

⁶John Tudor (editor), “On the Structure of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), p. 296.

wrote that the message of the first angel (Rev. 14:7) “seems now to be receiving its accomplishment. . . .”⁷

Noted American minister and educator Amzi Armstrong said in 1815 that Revelation 14:6-7 was then being fulfilled in “the missionary spirit, manifested in the societies formed for missionary purposes.”⁸

Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic, including American datesetter William Miller, continued in the same vein for many years.

In 1828 Edward Irving declared with a bit of variation that Revelation 12 describes the “Pagan period of the church’s history,” that Revelation 13 “relates to the Papacy,” and that Revelation 14 “gives the state of the true church. . . .”⁹

And in 1829 John Tudor, *The Morning Watch* editor, wrote that Revelation 14 is “the most important” part of the book of Revelation and that it overlaps later chapters.¹⁰

These leaders believed that Revelation 14 began to be fulfilled shortly after the French Revolution and that it previews major events leading to the end. Some felt that the 144,000 represented the true church’s protection during these events, while others added that the angels represented the church’s responsibility to warn of coming judgment. Since the latter part of Revelation 14 discusses Babylon’s end and even Armageddon, it isn’t surprising to find *The Morning Watch* concluding in 1829 that “we are now living in the time

⁷William Cuninghame, *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets* etc. (London: J. Hatchard, 1813), p. 311.

⁸Dr. Amzi Armstrong, *A Syllabus of Lectures* etc. (P.A. Johnson, 1815), p. 169.

⁹Edward Irving, *Dialogues on Prophecy*, Henry Drummond, editor (London: James Nisbet, 1828), Vol. 2, p. 43.

¹⁰John Tudor, “On the Structure of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), p. 294.

included in the sixth vial" (Rev. 16:12-16).¹¹ This was the theological climate surrounding Margaret.

Margaret's "Helps"

Historians of 19th century religious development have noted something quite interesting. Even though originators of new movements in this period were usually highly intelligent and extremely well-read, followers were often given the impression that their leader was just a simple, unlearned "vessel" into whom "divine" revelations could pour.

Some may have regarded Margaret in the same way. But from late 1828 until the spring of 1830 she'd been a bed-ridden invalid with plenty of time to read. Her biographer Robert Norton spoke of her family's "extensive library."¹²

Others have assumed that before Scofield's Bible (1909) with its cross references and marginal notes, no Bible had ever included such "helps." But this isn't so. Bibles before Margaret's time that featured either notes or parallel passages in margins included Tyndale's Bible (1525), Geneva Bible (1560), Bishops' Bible (1568), Reims-Douay Bible (1609), Self Interpreting Bible (1778), and Columbian Family Bible (1822). Le Roy Edwin Froom concluded that such Bibles "were doubtless the direct source of prophetic interpretation for many lay readers."¹³ And Edward Irving, the "Billy Graham" of his day who preached to huge crowds, undoubtedly influenced and inspired Margaret. A native from the same southern third of Scotland, Irving preached on the second advent near Margaret's home in 1828. The warm correspondence that

¹¹John Tudor, "On the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 573.

¹²Robert Norton, *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow*, p. 77.

¹³Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Review and Herald, 1946), Vol. IV, p. 123.

soon flowed both ways between the famous London preacher and the Macdonalds, the favorable mention by name of her older brothers in Irving's journal *The Morning Watch*, and the fact that Irving was one of the very first to receive from her a copy of her pretrib revelation — all these convince me that she was familiar with his writings and that they helped to provide some of the pieces she needed for her monumental contribution.

Without further ado, let's take a close look at Margaret Macdonald's main emphases in early 1830. This analysis will include what others previously taught and what her important revelation declared. By comparing her with others, we'll be able to discover the ones who could have inspired her. And eventually we'll also learn about the ones she influenced.

Here, then, are the ingredients that were needed before anyone could even *think* about a pretribulation rapture:

I. A PARTIAL RAPTURE

The earliest form of a partial rapture (which separated *part* of a group from the rest of the same group) was not a pretrib rapture. It was merely an undeveloped form of a prior rapture that was closely linked to the post-trib coming of Matthew 24. A prior rapture is really a *priority* rapture.

The Bible itself seems to teach priority: "one" is "taken" before the "other" is "left"; "wise" (and not "foolish") virgins are favored; "Philadelphia" is mentioned before "Laodicea"; the "man child" is "caught up" before the "woman" flees; and so on.

Biblical priority would certainly appeal to early 19th century British who were familiar with priority in their own monarchy with its ranks of nobility. In descending order from a king (or queen) would be a prince (or princess), a duke (or duchess), a marquis (or marquise or marchioness), an earl (or countess), a viscount (or viscountess), and finally a baron (or baroness).

Persons of "low" birth, such as the Macdonalds, could never expect to become a Lord or Lady in British society; their only hope was *spiritual* nobility — becoming "kings and priests" and reigning with Christ "on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

It's important to note that these early premillennial partial rapturists in Britain emphasized the priority of *worthy* Christians over *less worthy* Christians — not the priority of Christians over Jews, a recurrent theme in present-day dispensationalism.

In fact, the same 19th century developers saw nothing significant for the Jews until the *end* of the church age. And here's why. Since the Jews hadn't been restored to Palestine when the tribulation had been 1260 *years*, the historicists-becoming-futurists of the early 1800's felt they were justified in seeing no Jewish restoration during a future tribulation of 1260 *days*.

Those participating in the Albury prophecy conferences in southern England (1826-1830) were agreed that the Jews would return to Palestine at the tribulation's *end* during the very last of the final vials of God's wrath. Some were of the opinion that this restoration could be accomplished during the last few weeks before the advent. Long before modern technology, the December 1831 issue of *The Morning Watch* speculated that "complicated revolving machines" would assist in transporting the returning Jews!¹⁴

Because these early partial rapturists visualized no spotlight — not even a candle — on the Jews until the end of the age, they easily applied various symbols in Revelation (even "Jewish" ones) to the church.

In order to understand how early partial rapturism came about, it's necessary to observe the development of the following "type" (prefigure, foreshadow) drawn from the feasts of ancient Israel (Lev. 23):

¹⁴"W. L.," "On the Restoration and Conversion of the Tribes of Israel" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), p. 298.

A. "Firstfruits"

1. In 1733 Sir Isaac Newton said that "the feasts of the *Jews* were typical of things to come. The Passover related to the first coming of *Christ*, and the feasts of the seventh month to his second coming. . . ." ¹⁵

2. Sixty years later Samuel Hopkins wrote that the feast of tabernacles will be fulfilled during a future, earthly "millennium." ¹⁶

3. In 1828 John Tudor called the period he was then living in "our day of atonement." ¹⁷

4. Rapid, detailed development of "firstfruits" appeared in 1829 in five articles in *The Morning Watch*, all written by editor John Tudor. (I gained the impression that Irving had Tudor "test the water" with this idea. Later we'll see Irving himself echoing it.) Tudor's first article on this concept was the very first article in this British journal's first issue. ¹⁸

Expressing what soon became known as the "times and seasons" theme, Tudor stressed the importance of "the seasons of the year and the products of the earth . . . there is scarcely a prophecy in which some reference to agriculture does not occur. . . ." Connected with this "are the great festivals of the Jewish year. . . . Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, are linked to . . . Passover, First-fruits, and Day of Atonement. The only remaining solemnity in the Jewish year is the Feast of Tabernacles . . . when 'he shall appear the second time' (Heb. ix. 28) . . ." (p. 8).

¹⁵Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel etc.* (London: J. Darby and T. Browne, 1733), p. 255.

¹⁶Samuel Hopkins, *A Treatise on the Millennium* (Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793), p. 86.

¹⁷John Tudor, "On the Structure of the Apocalypse," *Papers Read Before the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy* (London: Andrew Panton, 1828), p. 9.

¹⁸John Tudor, "On the Study of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), pp. 1-11.

5. Tudor's second article, also in March, was entitled "The Times and Seasons." A footnote tied to this title said that this concept had originated in a pamphlet, "Hints on the Study of Prophecy," used earlier by the Continental Society. The pamphlet's author was not revealed.¹⁹

After quoting Acts 1:7 ("not for you to know the times or the seasons") and I Thessalonians 5:1 ("of the times and the seasons . . . ye have no need that I write unto you"), Tudor wrote: "Here we see, that what at one time was hidden from the church, at another time it is criminal for the church not to be acquainted with" (pp. 36-7). On the next page he said, "*first-fruits, harvest and vintage . . . are MARKS BY WHICH WE MAY CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGE THE DISCURSIVE PROPHECIES. . . .*"

6. Tudor's third article was more elaborate.²⁰ He wrote that:

we only waited for some general principle . . . which, I verily believe, we have now received, in the system of Times and Seasons. . . . I take to myself no other merit than that of endeavouring to apply this important discovery. . . . A little further examination shews that a certain classification is observed: — that the seasons of the year, namely, first-fruits, harvest, and vintage are kept together in one series, as xiv.; that the allusions to the tabernacle or temple are kept distinct from the seasons, as xi. xii. xiii.; and that it is in this tabernacle series only that *dates* are given — as, forty-two months (xi. 2), 1260 days (xi. 3), three days and a half (xi. 9, 11), 1260 days (xii. 6), time, times, and a half (xii. 14), forty-two months (xiii. 5), 666 (xiii. 18). . . . And also that the *times* do not extend lower than the period of the beast's supremacy (xiii. 5): and at this period, when the 1260 days expire, the *seasons* begin, and run on to the end of this present dispensation, and to the beginning of the Millennium. To understand the beauty and propriety of this classification, we must bear in mind the *typical history* to which it alludes (namely, the tabernacle in the wilderness,) and the *fixed times* on which its service was performed; and the *seasons*, which commenced after crossing Jordan and coming out of the wilderness.

¹⁹John Tudor, "The Times and Seasons" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), pp. 36-44.

²⁰John Tudor, "On the Structure of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), pp. 292-314.

During this time series of 1260 days, the church is represented as in the wilderness. . . . (p. 293)

Here we find Tudor expressing the partial rapturistic priority of some Christians over other Christians, based on Old Testament types. This priority is fitted in between the end of a future 1260-day tribulation and the start of a future millennium. But his comments about first-fruits, harvest, and vintage weren't original. An 1826 Irving book, originally a sermon Irving preached at the Continental Society in 1825, had declared that the "first-fruits . . . were gathered before the harvest which immediately precedeth the treading of the wine-press of wrath."²¹

While discussing Revelation 14, Tudor's view of priority seems to rest more on a title than on timing. He says that "though they are called 'first-fruits,' this only declares that they shall have part in the first resurrection. For Babylon is not yet judged (11); the Son of man has not yet come (14); the harvest is not yet ripe (15): and till these take place we cannot expect the first resurrection . . ." (p. 304). On the next page timing is more apparent: the "seventh trumpet" (tied to I Thess. 4:16) is followed by Revelation 14:16's "reaping," and this reaping is followed by the "day of the Lord" and "wine-press" (Rev. 19:15).

On page 308 Tudor uttered what might seem, at first glance, to be a pretrib statement: ". . . the 'sealed,' thus removed from the 'great tribulation.'" Allow me to quote the whole section:

The first-fruits of his people I therefore believe to be gathered into the garner at this time of reaping; and it is for this privilege that I think we are instructed to watch and pray, Luke xxi. 36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." But I wish clearly to be understood as limiting this privilege to the "sealed," thus removed from the "great tribulation." There will

²¹Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God* (Glasgow: Chalmers and Collins, 1826), p. 581.

still be elect ones left on the earth, "for whose sake the days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22): these shall be gathered partly during this great tribulation, and wholly at Christ's personal coming to destroy his enemies and set up his Millennial kingdom, of which the Feast of Tabernacles is the type. In this way do I understand the countless multitude (vii. 9) having *palms* in their hands: to the 144,000, palms are not assigned, and I therefore think that they are removed at an earlier period than the Feast of Tabernacles.

Tudor added (p. 309) that "the day of Atonement" is "our day of salvation." He thus split up the "elect" ones of Matthew 24. Most of them (the "countless multitude") would be on earth for the entire tribulation until the "Feast of Tabernacles"; the privileged ones (the "sealed" 144,000 "first-fruits") would be raptured shortly before the others at the "Day of Atonement." The difference in timing was based on a *five-day gap* on the Jewish calendar — the 10th of Tisri preceding the 15th of Tisri! And only after Babylon was punished would this priority (in a post-trib setting) begin.

7. Tudor's 4th article was published in December.²² He spoke of the "evolution of those times and seasons which the Father hath kept in his own power" (p. 525).

On page 541, after having listed important prophecy works appearing earlier in the 19th century, he stated:

"Last among the means by which prophecy has been unfolded to us, we have to mention 'the Times and Seasons:' that is, the typical application of the set times of the Jewish year to the order of events declared in the prophecies. The manner of its application to prophecy was explained in No. I. of this Journal; and, though last in order of discovery, we regard it in importance as among the first and chiefest of the means we possess for understanding prophecy."

8. Tudor's 5th article was also in the December issue.²³

²²John Tudor, "On the gradual Unfolding of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), pp. 525-542.

²³John Tudor, "On the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), pp. 543-577.

Speaking of seasons, he concluded that the "little season" of Revelation 6:11 "extends beyond the Papal period, including the whole sixth seal, and expiring at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. . . ." He added that this "little" period "terminates" at Revelation 19:9 (p. 551).

He again emphasized that the countless multitude is "gathered" at the "Feast of Tabernacles" ("15th Tisri") while the "sealed ones are gathered when Christ comes from without the veil (Heb. ix. 28)" at the prior "Day of Atonement" ("10th Tisri") (p. 555). On this and the following page he stated: ". . . that portion of the church affected by the seals shall be translated at the end of the sixth; and therefore be witnesses of, not partakers in, the events of the seventh. Besides, the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial, all are fulfilled at the same time. . . ."

On page 575 Tudor referred to the tribulation "martyrs" as "a second company, being that multitude represented (vii. 9) coming in at the feast of tabernacles. . . ." And he said that these martyrs are "the foolish virgins in the parable (Matt. xxv.), who are excluded from the marriage supper, but, though not provided with oil or knowledge to attain the privilege of the day-star resurrection, have still faith to die for their Lord, and by martyrdom attain a place in the Millennium."

9. Considering all of the above, it's easy to see why many in Margaret Macdonald's day were "harvest"-minded. As early as 1826 many had been praying for the "latter rain" (Zech. 10:1) — the end-time outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:17) that would produce the final "harvest." In Margaret's first revelation, which preceded her famous one, she mentioned "a great ingathering" in the future — a possible reference to the feast of in-gathering (feast of tabernacles).

Her major revelation didn't single out any Jewish feast. But she expressed the "firstfruits" idea without using the term. She said that "only those that are alive in him" — identified as "those . . . filled with the Spirit" — "will be caught up

to meet him in the air." Unlike Darby who saw a distinction between the "heavenly" church and "earthly" Jews, she (and those who influenced her) saw only a distinction between "heavenly" Christians and "earthly" Christians; they expected to be "firstfructed" before the rest of the church was merely "harvested."

Charles Ryrie and some others who haven't carefully researched partial rapturism's roots have wondered how Margaret could see persons labeled as "the church" both *before* and *after* her rapture. My book *The Great Rapture Hoax* revealed that other early partial rapturists talked the same way; even Darby, when discussing this view, spoke of "the church" (of Laodicea) left behind after "the church" (of Philadelphia) has been raptured!²⁴

Even present-day pretribs say that only *part* of the church will become the "living saints" who are raptured; they view the rest of the church as the "dead in Christ." Is it difficult, then, to believe that Margaret and others saw only *part* of the church (spiritually "alive" and not spiritually "dead" saints) making up the "living saints" group? Whereas Margaret's emphasis was on *spiritually* alive saints making up the "living saints" group, today's pretribs emphasize *physically* alive saints making up the same group.

Another topic associated with partial rapturism is:

B. "Sealing"

1. In 1733 Sir Isaac Newton expressed the time-honored view of "sealing": that it referred to *protection* on earth and not to any sort of prior rapture. He wrote that the "servants of God" (Rev. 7:3) are sealed for protection from "the visions which appear upon opening the seventh seal" (Rev. 8:1).²⁵

²⁴Dave MacPherson, *The Great Rapture Hoax*, pp. 169-174.

²⁵Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies* etc., p. 267.

2. In 1826, after stating that "sealing" places a person in an "ark" of safety, Edward Irving commented that the "sealed tribes" of Revelation 7 "were worthy to be preserved, not only because they had gotten the victory over the beast, and the number of his name, but also because they were able to interpret the mystical meaning of the events which were about to be transacted. . . ." ²⁶

3. John Tudor spoke in 1828 of "sealing a true church" for "protection." ²⁷

4. By September of the following year, Tudor suggested in *The Morning Watch* that "sealing" could have more than one meaning. While the "countless multitude" would be sealed for *protection* on earth until the "Feast of Tabernacles," the sealing of the favored "first-fruits" would qualify them for a slightly earlier *prior rapture* at the "Day of Atonement." ²⁸

5. In *The Morning Watch* (Dec., 1829), Tudor had some interesting thoughts on the 12 sealed tribes (144,000) of Revelation 7:

. . . some have supposed this sealed people to be the literal Jews: but this cannot be; for these tribes are most indisputably protected by sealing from judgments *to which they would otherwise be exposed*: now these judgments are brought on by the Papal persecutions, in which every kingdom of Christendom has at some time or other taken part, but in which the Jews have never joined, being themselves objects of persecution. We must therefore seek for these tribes among the nations of Christendom. The structure of the book also ties us down to the French Revolution as the time when these judgments began, and we know that at that time the Jews had no peculiar exemption. And as the whole twelve tribes are here enumerated, while ten of the tribes of Israel have been lost and unknown for more than twenty centuries, it is absurd to interpret these sealed ones of the Jews, who

²⁶Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity* etc., pp. 497, 515.

²⁷John Tudor, "On the Structure of the Apocalypse," *Papers Read Before the Society* etc., p. 19.

²⁸John Tudor, "On the Structure of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), p. 308.

belong but to two of the twelve tribes. This is a symbolical book, and solely concerns the Christian church. . . .²⁹

6. Margaret's ground-breaking prophecy included "the servants of God sealed in their foreheads" — drawn from Revelation 7:3. Since she identified with the 144,000 servants, you can see why she harmonized this chapter with Revelation 14 which also discusses a group of 144,000. (Scofield ties Rev. 14:1 to Rev. 7:3.) Early in her revelation, Margaret also identified with the "wise virgins" (Matt. 25); note that the 144,000 ties with "virgins" and "firstfruits" (Rev. 14:4).

She too gave "sealing" a double meaning. Some would be sealed for *protection* while a special "firstfruits" group would be sealed for a *prior rapture*.

C. "Church/Israel Dichotomy"

Today's pretribs often emphasize the "distinction" between the church and Israel. They define "Israel" as ethnic Jews or Israelites. They insist that this "distinction" necessarily becomes an end-time "dichotomy" (a physical separation) between the church and ethnic Jews, that God has to remove the church from earth before He can again deal with the latter group.

Up to this point, we've observed that the early partial rapturists (including Margaret) emphasized only a distinction (and end-time separation) between *worthy* church members and *less worthy* church members; no one offered anything even remotely resembling today's "church/Israel dichotomy." If I may coin a phrase, these earlier developers had only a "church/church dichotomy."

II. A SECRET RAPTURE

Before the development of the partial rapture theory,

²⁹John Tudor, "On the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 553.

which preceded the development of pretribulation rapturism, the only “secret” coming Christians looked for was the second advent; it was secret only in point of time (“of that day and hour knoweth no man” — Matt. 24:36).

After partial rapturism began its progress and folks began talking about a prior rapture, another meaning of “secret” was added to the first one. The new meaning had to do with *privileged* vision or knowledge; only certain people would be able to see Christ during the rapture or know that this sudden event had happened — an event that would be “secret” to all others.

Let’s look closer at “secret” and its usage:

1. My first exhibit is the influential Spanish work by Manuel de Lacunza, a Jesuit priest who was born in Chile in 1731 and died in Italy in 1801. The title page had him posing as “Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, A Converted Jew.” This treatise was circulated in manuscript form as early as the 1790’s, and the first of several book editions appeared in Spain in 1812. In 1827 Edward Irving produced an English translation of it.³⁰

Whether or not Lacunza was referring to supposed apparitions, he wrote: “We believe only in two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . one already passed, the other infallibly to come to pass.” He added: “. . . I know there be many doctors (even without counting Arduino and Berruyer,) who admit and set forth many other comings of the Lord in glory and majesty, although in secret, (which appears to me a true entangling of the matter,) and by these secret comings which they suppose, they pretend to explain not a few passages of the prophets and even of the gospel. . . .”³¹

2. In March of 1829 John Tudor, using Christ’s transfiguration as a type, suggested privileged vision for some at a

³⁰Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra [Manual de Lacunza], *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, translated . . . by the Rev. Edward Irving, A. M. (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827), 2 vols.

³¹*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 274-5.

prior time: "Rev. vii. 9-17, I suppose to be the Feast of Tabernacles. . . . This will be when 'the tabernacle of God is with men;' when He . . . tabernacles amongst us; when that glory which was before visible only to Peter, James, and John . . . shall be seen by every eye — (though, it may be, they which pierced him shall see him at an earlier period, and answering to the Day of Atonement). . . ." ³²

3. In December of 1829 Tudor quoted a verse (later used by Margaret for proof of a prior, secret rapture) to try to establish prior secrecy in regard to Antichrist. After quoting "the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," Tudor said that "when the last personal Antichrist shall come forth, it shall be true of the commencement of his career that he 'cometh not with observation.'" ³³

4. Margaret's types for secrecy included Stephen, Paul ("above the brightness of the sun" — Acts 26:13), and John, all of whom saw or heard what others couldn't see or hear.

Concerning her prior rapture she declared: "I saw the error to be, that men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people . . . that we may discern that which cometh not with observation to the natural eye. Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his appearance I felt that those who were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and feel walking in the midst of them, while those who had not the Spirit could see nothing. . . ."

But now we arrive at her most famous emphasis:

III. A PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE

What was the "spark" that produced the earliest form of

³²John Tudor, "The Times and Seasons" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), p. 42.

³³John Tudor, "On the gradual Unfolding" etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Dec. 1829), pp. 527-8.

this eschatological escapism? Does this theory rest clearly on Scripture or on something else?

A booklet by Scottish writer Duncan McDougall, undated but written after World War I, assumed what I've never found accepted by any scholar: that "Irving heard what he believed to be a Voice from heaven commanding him to preach the Secret Rapture of the Saints."³⁴ (Almost as if it anticipated such a groundless charge, the first issue of *The Morning Watch* stated: "Angelic messengers we look not for; a voice from heaven we expect not. . . ." And then this explanation: "... the word of revelation was completed in that which Jesus gave to his servant John. . . ."³⁵)

Some have suggested that the *timing* of the rapture isn't literally mentioned anywhere in the Bible but only implied, that the rapture actually takes place in the *blank space* between the end of Revelation 3 and the start of Revelation 4!

The Scofield Bible's explanatory note on John hearing "Come up hither" (Rev. 4:1) says that this "seems clearly to indicate" that the rapture occurs here and is therefore pretribulational. (John Walvoord's *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* disagrees by pointing out that this can't be a symbol of the rapture since John, *while remaining on earth*, was merely allowed to have unearthly visions of the future. The first edition of Walvoord's *The Rapture Question* moreover admits that a pretrib rapture is *not* explicitly taught in the Bible!³⁶)

Well, if pretrib didn't come from some sort of non-scriptural manifestation but from Scripture (as advocates claim), and if it didn't spring from any *clear* Bible passage (as Walvoord, pretribism's "dean," has admitted), then it must have been derived from something in the Bible that is *un-*

³⁴Duncan McDougall, *The Rapture of the Saints* (America's Promise Broadcast, 1982 reprint), p. 21.

³⁵John Tudor, "On the Study of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar. 1829), p. 6.

³⁶John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 103-4; John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Dunham Publishing Co., 1957), p. 148.

clear — something that isn't literal but symbolic.

Today's pretribs cannot derive the timing of their rapture from any clear, literal statement in the Bible; their timing of it, in relation to other events, is commonly based on *symbolism* in the book of Revelation. They shouldn't be surprised, then, to learn that the earliest pretribs, who also couldn't find any such literal statement, were also forced to base their rapture's timing on Revelation's *symbolism*!

Several elements were absolutely necessary before anyone could believe in a pretrib rapture. First of all, one had to believe in a *future* tribulation. One also had to find *symbolism*, before the tribulation, that could be applied to the church (or at least part of the church). And this symbolism also had to include something that could clearly be seen as a *literal* removal from earth of all or some church members.

The earliest pretrib rapturists in Britain found two symbols in Revelation meeting these requirements: the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11 who "ascended up to heaven," and the "man child" of Revelation 12 who "was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Later we'll see that for several decades John Darby based his pretrib rapture on one of these two symbols. But others used the same symbol for the same purpose many years before Darby did!

Other Apocalyptic symbols didn't have all the ingredients the developers needed. For example, John (Rev. 4) stayed on earth and was only "in the spirit." And the 144,000 (Rev. 14) are only "redeemed" and not clearly raptured.

Is it possible that pretrib could have emerged before Margaret Macdonald's day? During previous periods, was there any moment when all of the necessary components were in existence? Let's see:

A. Early Church Period

1. A Future Tribulation

Reviewed earlier was Irenaeus' statement concerning a

future tribulation of 1260 days. Other early church leaders uniformly had the same outlook.

2. The “Two Witnesses”

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” (Rev. 11:3).

These were often viewed as the two Old Testament personalities, Enoch and Elijah, who didn’t die physically. They would return to earth, be killed, regain physical life, and be raptured — literally. Hippolytus (160-240) was typical of those who pinpointed Enoch and Elijah.³⁷

3. The “Man Child”

In addition to Hippolytus, Victorinus (240-303) was among those who held that the “man child” looked back to Christ and to His ascension.³⁸

A thorough examination of the earliest Christian writings shows not even a hint of pretrib. In fact, there wasn’t even a combination that could have resulted in such doctrine.

Nevertheless some modern pretrib leaders, by quoting selectively, have tried to give this impression. Robert Van Kampen quotes Robert Gundry who demonstrated that John Walvoord (in 1954), Gerald Stanton (in 1956), and J. Dwight Pentecost (in 1958) all chopped off an early quote *at the same spot* to try to prove imminence that readers could deduce as *pretrib* imminence; but the covered-up remainder shows that this early writer was actually expecting the Antichrist to arrive before the *non-imminent* advent — the only coming he was looking for!³⁹

³⁷Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* (ANF, Vol. 5, p. 213).

³⁸Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John* (ANF, Vol. 7, p. 355).

³⁹Robert Van Kampen, *The Sign* (Crossway Books, 1992), pp. 449-50; Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 175.

B. Later Church Period

1. A Future Tribulation

From the 1100's to modern times, there were many who believed they were *then* enduring the tribulation; the tribulation wasn't "days" but "years," and it wasn't "future" but "present."

2. The "Two Witnesses"

This symbol was often interpreted as the Old and New Testaments. Obviously Enoch and Elijah hadn't literally reappeared before or during the tribulation these historicists said they were enduring. But their reappearance was still a possibility. Twelfth century cleric Bruno of Segni (Italy), for example, wrote that these witnesses, which he equated with Zechariah 4:3's "two olive trees," are either the two Testaments (his "spiritual" interpretation) or Enoch and Elijah (his "literal" interpretation).⁴⁰

3. The "Man Child"

Although Puritan scholar Thomas Brightman (1562-1607) viewed Constantine the Great as the "man child" who preceded the "woman" in the 1260-year "wilderness," others still saw only Christ in this symbol.

Christians living in this later period who believed they were then in the final tribulation obviously couldn't turn the clock back and look for a pretrib coming.

C. Early 19th Century

1. A Future Tribulation

We've already shown that early 19th century historicists were increasingly adopting a future tribulation, even if it was initially only the final form of what they said had been going on for many centuries.

Although William Witherby projected futurist aspects

⁴⁰Bruno of Segni (Italy), *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (in J. P. Migne, *PL*, Vol. 165, Cols. 638-9).

as early as 1818, Samuel Maitland's pro-futurism treatise in 1826 was decidedly more influential.⁴¹

But *The Morning Watch* represented the most advanced and detailed prophetic thinking prior to Margaret's pronouncement. The switch to a future tribulation (or reign of Antichrist) was evident on this journal's pages throughout 1829.

In the June issue editor John Tudor warned: "I am fully convinced . . . that we are now on the eve of a crisis . . . greater than the destruction of Jerusalem, or any other national calamity, for it shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, no, nor ever shall be (Dan. xii. 1; Matt. xxiv. 21; Mark xiii. 19)."⁴²

The same journal had been maintaining that "Antichrist" had already appeared in two forms: the "pagan" followed by the "Papal." In December Tudor was looking for a future "Infidel" form: ". . . an Infidel Antichrist shall arise in the last days, who shall . . . exceed the Pope in enormity. . . . This last persecutor does, in fact, spring up in the Papacy before its period expires. . . ."⁴³

2. The "Two Witnesses"

The Morning Watch (1829) emphasized connections between the witnesses of Revelation 11 and symbols in Zechariah 4, symbols that Margaret relied upon in her chief revelation the following year. This emphasis is in two articles by John Tudor.

Readers have noticed the frequent mention of Tudor, a native of Wales. Besides editing *The Morning Watch*, he had been the editor of the *Church of England Quarterly Review*.

⁴¹William Witherby, *A Review of Scripture* etc. (London: Longman, 1818); Samuel R. Maitland, *An Enquiry Into the Grounds* etc. (London: Hatchard and Son, 1826).

⁴²John Tudor, "The Study of Prophecy a Question of Degree" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1829), p. 185.

⁴³John Tudor, "On the gradual Unfolding" etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 538.

In 1835 he became an apostle in Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church. Seemingly the greatest developer of prophecy among the Irvingites, eventually Tudor might have become the pretrib originator if a certain Scottish lassie hadn't been the first person to put all the pieces together!

Tudor's first article stated: "Among all the books of Prophecy, there is not one whose external claims upon our attention are stronger than those of the book of Zechariah." He then quoted portions of verses 2, 6, and 7 in Zechariah 4, portions included in Margaret's important contribution. Although Revelation 11 seemed to harmonize its two witnesses with two olive trees, Tudor said that the two olive trees of Zechariah 4 represent "the Scriptures."⁴⁴

Tudor's second article declared that the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11 are "the Old and New Testaments," adding: "They are said to be clothed in sackcloth, because during the Papal period they were not allowed to appear in their own becoming dress of the original Hebrew and Greek, but every one was obliged to receive them in the degrading sackcloth of the Latin Vulgate. . . ."⁴⁵

3. The "Man Child"

This symbol was viewed by Tudor the way the church had long viewed it: "The child can be none other but Christ himself, for none but he can be said to have been 'caught up unto God, and to his throne.'"⁴⁶

Having gone over church periods of the past, we've noted that theologians prior to Margaret Macdonald had neither a pretrib rapture nor any combination of beliefs that could have led to one. Even the 1829 issues of *The Morning Watch*, the prophecy "think tank" of the early 19th century, didn't have

⁴⁴John Tudor, "On the Visions of Zechariah" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), pp. 50, 52, 58.

⁴⁵John Tudor, "On the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 562.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 566.

the necessary ingredients. So where did she find what she needed? As the old saying goes,

Never Underestimate The . . .

power of a woman!

An analysis of Margaret's beliefs in 1830 will demonstrate that she needed only one ingredient for her stellar achievement, a catalyst that even *The Morning Watch's* articles of 1829 couldn't provide.

Like others, she saw a *future*, judgment-packed tribulation. She wrote that the Antichrist "will" be revealed, that some of the elect "will" be deceived, that the false Christ "shall" be seen on earth, etc.

Like others, she believed in a *literal* catching up. She expected to be "caught up to meet him in the air."

Like others, she said that only *part* of the church would be caught up (only those who are "filled with the Spirit").

Like others, she didn't view the "man child" of Revelation 12 as a *church* symbol; in fact, she made no mention of this symbol.

Like others, she emphasized the witnesses of Zechariah 4 which many had tied to the witnesses of Revelation 11.

I diagrammed all 1829 issues of *The Morning Watch* — a tiny fraction of all the diagramming I did for this book — and found out that their greatest emphasis was on these witnesses. The earliest mention that Christ is the "man child" was in the December issue, while discussion of the witnesses went from the first issue through the last issue in December. And no wonder. These historicists, interpreting Revelation 11's two witnesses as the Old and New Testaments, felt they were then in the time when these two Testaments would finish "their testimony" (v. 7) of warning of coming judgment just before the "beast" would "kill" them. Darby's 1829 work similarly referred to "direct testimonies of the word of God," "testimony. . . of judgment," "testimony of a reign of Christ's

power,” “direct testimony,” etc.

Unlike others, Margaret said that the witnesses would *literally* be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. (How could anyone believe that the two Testaments would literally ascend “up to heaven,” verse 12? And why would God rapture away the Bible anyway?)

But unlike others, she didn’t interpret the witnesses as the two Testaments. Or as Enoch and Elijah. She viewed the witnesses as the favored “firstfruits” that would be raptured first. She borrowed several Zechariah 4 phrases that are tied to the witnesses there and applied them to those who would be caught up before the revealing of Antichrist; she thus identified them with the witnesses of Revelation 11.

Some of the earliest church leaders, pinpointing Enoch and Elijah as Revelation 11’s two witnesses, had taken “ascended up to heaven” literally. And this rapture had been placed in a *pretrib* setting. So for centuries before Margaret’s time a literal *pretrib* rapture had been in existence. But it wasn’t a *pretrib* rapture of the church (or part of the church). It was only a *pretrib* rapture of the two witnesses.

Margaret added the one needed ingredient: seeing these witnesses as a symbol of the *church*. She thus combined church *symbolism* with rapture *literalism* in a *pretrib* setting (even though the Bible nowhere states explicitly that the two witnesses represent *church* members) and introduced a totally different end-time view!

Margaret's Inspiration?

Since this well-read lassie could have known that others had taught the literal catching up of Revelation 11’s witnesses in a *pretrib* setting, I naturally wondered if one of her contemporaries could have suggested that these witnesses represent the church (or part of it).

Aware that she greatly admired Edward Irving and his ministry, I went through his earliest writings, looking for any

discussion of this Revelation symbol.

His 1826 book *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God* (originally an 1825 sermon he preached) expressed the long-held view that these witnesses are “the Holy Scriptures.”⁴⁷

The following year, in his lengthy preliminary discourse which prefaced the translation of Lacunza’s work, he wrote that “the two witnesses of God” are “the Old and New Testament.”⁴⁸

Later, after having checked every other conceivable source, I found myself again going over Irving’s preliminary discourse. In the first part of it I discovered some sentences that I must have overlooked earlier. Historicist Irving was applying Revelation 11’s witnesses to “a succession of chosen and endowed men, who . . . should from age to age be God’s mouths unto men, and his faithful witnesses. . . .” He concluded: “This succession of witnesses in the midst of the days is THE CHURCH” (emphasis his).⁴⁹

All Margaret had to do was apply Irving’s historicist definition to her futurist scheme. I can’t say with certainty that this Irving statement provided the only “grist” she needed for her pretrib rapture “mill,” but at least we now know that *all* of the ingredients for her revelation were available on earth several years before her heavenly vision!

Irving’s interpretation of the witnesses as “THE CHURCH” appears as a “sandwich” between his earlier (1826) and his later interpretation (in the latter part of his preliminary discourse) that they are a symbol of the Scriptures. But he was open to new ideas. At this point he may have been influenced by Lacunza⁵⁰ who viewed the same witnesses as “two congregations of faithful and religious ministers of God” and

⁴⁷Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity* etc., p. 100.

⁴⁸Edward Irving, Preliminary Discourse, Lacunza’s *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. I, p. clxxxv.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. x.

⁵⁰Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. II, p. 118. (Influenced indirectly perhaps by a pre-1825 edition.)

(later on the same page) “two moral bodies.”

Although Lacunza saw a *future* tribulation and hinted that the witnesses could represent at least part of the *church*, he didn’t see them raptured before the tribulation; these “two congregations” were the “two wings” accompanying the “woman” in the 1260-day “wilderness,” Revelation 12:14. A few have seen a slight “priority” gap in the only coming Lacunza expected (Rev. 19), but it resembled what partial rapturists later suggested in 1829 and couldn’t occur until the tribulation days were “concluded,” as Lacunza put it.⁵¹

If Irving temporarily came up with the only ingredient Margaret needed, what kept *him* from originating the pretrib view ahead of her? Well, at that particular time he thought he was well into a 1260-year tribulation. Belief in a *future* tribulation was his own missing ingredient!

A Faulty Basis?

So now we know which Revelation symbol was evidently the basis for Margaret Macdonald’s pretribulation rapture. And Edward Irving could have supplied what she needed for her novel conclusion.

But had her symbol always been placed in a pretrib setting? Had previous theologians been in agreement that Revelation 11’s catching up of the witnesses occurs *before* the last 1260 days?

Both Revelation 11 and Revelation 12 mention 1260 days. Those who believe that both chapters speak of the same period of days — that the “two witnesses” and “woman” are on earth together — see the witnesses caught up *after* the last 1260 days.

Those who deduce two periods of 1260 days each — the prophesying of the witnesses followed by the survival of the woman — can see the witnesses caught up *before* the last 1260 days.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 83; Vol. II, pp. 114-16, 250.

Margaret saw her symbol removed from earth before these final days. If she held to a double fulfillment of "1260," then she placed the preaching of the witnesses in the *first* half of a seven-year period.

Those who had such an outlook included Victorinus (240-303); the witnesses would preach for 1260 days and then a 1260-day tribulation would follow.⁵²

But others disagreed. For example, eminent Scottish mathematician Lord John Napier (1550-1617) saw them preaching during the *last* half of such a period.⁵³

And disagreement still exists. Hal Lindsey has them preaching during the *first* half of a seven-year tribulation period, while John Walvoord sees them preaching during the *last* half.⁵⁴

Interestingly, early in his career John Darby placed the witnesses in the *first* half. Many years later he switched them over to the *last* half.⁵⁵

Evidently Margaret had been influenced only by those who had placed the rapture of the witnesses *before* the last 1260 days. Apparently she didn't know about those who'd placed it *after* those days. Therefore her foundation was a *changeable* symbol and not one that could be seen in only a *pretrib* setting!

Be not surprised, then, when you learn that later on the Irvingites (followed by Darby) de-emphasized the witnesses and turned more and more to a much safer pretrib symbol: Revelation 12's "man child," a symbol which, to my knowledge, has never been placed in a posttrib setting.

Now a few words should be said about the "sign" of Matthew 24:30 and Margaret's interpretation of it:

⁵²Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* etc. (ANF, Vol. 7, p. 354).

⁵³Lord John Napier, *A Plain Discovery of the Whole Revelation of Saint John* etc. (Edinburgh: R. Waldegrave, 1593), p. 32.

⁵⁴Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming*, p. 162; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 178.

⁵⁵J. N. Darby, *Prophetic No. 2*, p. 176; *Prophetic No. 4*, p. 200.

The “Sign”

In my previous books I’ve shown that Margaret equated the “sign” of Matthew 24:30 with Christ Himself.

H. A. W. Meyer wrote: “Following the older expositors, Fritzsche, Ewald, Hengstenberg, R. Hofmann understand the coming *Messiah Himself*” to be this “sign.”⁵⁶

And Henry Alford mentioned that one of the pre-Macdonald expositors who interpreted this “sign” as “*the Son of Man Himself*” was Johann Bengel (1687-1752).⁵⁷

So even in this regard Margaret was hardly original. But she more than made up for what had already been expressed by initiating an unheard-of escapism!

Occult Influence

What generally hasn’t been known about Margaret is the extent to which she was open to the world of the “occult” (definition: “secret or hidden knowledge of supernatural phenomena”).

But there had always been a thin line between Biblical mysticism (“mysteries” attracting those who at times claimed to have solved them) and occult mysticism. Fortune-tellers could easily quote Bible verses and clerics could just as easily make predictions that eventually fizzled.

Take the word “rapture.” Many still don’t know that this word (body-lifting sense) had been used for centuries by medieval mystics to describe their own *levitation* a few inches (or even several feet) above the floor or ground. Such “raptures” were often condemned by Catholic leaders.

According to Brewer’s *A Dictionary of Miracles*, the same mystics justified their body levitations with verses like

⁵⁶Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Gospel of Matthew* (Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), p. 423.

⁵⁷Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894), Vol. I, p. 243.

James 4:10 ("Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up") — as if such verses discussed *anti-gravity* instead of humility and its reward!⁵⁸

One famous mystic, St. Teresa, wrote in her 16th century autobiography entitled *Life* that whenever "the rapture was over . . . I scarcely knew that my feet touched the ground."⁵⁹

And Robert Norton, the pretrib origin chronicler, revealed the following about Margaret and one of her friends: "I have seen both her and Miss Margaret Macdonald stand like statues scarcely touching the ground, evidently supernaturally."⁶⁰

Andrew Drummond commented that Margaret's close friend Mary Campbell practiced "automatic writing" and "was a young woman of intense psychical power. . . . Had she lived at the end of the nineteenth century instead of at the beginning, her energies would probably have found expression as a 'medium.'"⁶¹

An 1830 issue of *The Morning Watch* touched on the mystical atmosphere of the day by remarking that "even in our own land of Bibles and sects . . . most neighbourhoods have a 'cunning woman,' like the Witch of Endor, or Pytho-ness of old, who leads the credulous peasant to the recovery of his lost watch or strayed cattle."⁶²

Books on the occult, such as Somerlott's *Here, Mr. Splitfoot*, agree that foretelling, or predicting the future, is the most sought after occult ability. Since the past is behind us, the most exciting aspect of Bible prophecy is also that which hasn't yet happened.

⁵⁸The Rev. E. Cobham Brewer, *A Dictionary of Miracles* etc. (J. B. Lippincott Co., 1884), p. 215.

⁵⁹*Mysteries of the Unexplained* (Reader's Digest, 1982), p. 285.

⁶⁰Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles* etc., p. 25.

⁶¹Andrew Landale Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1937), pp. 141-2.

⁶²Anon. writer, "The Duty of Prophets" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1830), p. 836.

Although Margaret wasn't a rapture date-setter, she was an Antichrist-setter. On the same evening that found her arriving at her pretrib rapture construction, she predicted that 19th century socialist Robert Owen (who established communes including the one at New Harmony, Indiana) would eventually become the Antichrist. But Owen failed to do his part and died in 1858!

This chapter has examined those who could have influenced the young, creative citizen of Port Glasgow, Scotland. And it has analyzed the main emphases in her principal revelation.

In the next chapter we'll see how, and how soon, she influenced others.

III

IRVING AND FRIENDS

For a time, during its earliest development, the infant pretrib rapture was overshadowed by two other controversial topics: Christ's human nature, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In the late 1820's Edward Irving had been proclaiming to his London congregation of Presbyterians (Church of Scotland) that Christ was born with the same kind of flesh that all humans have — mortal, corrupt, and corruptible. Although he maintained that Christ lived a sinless life, Irving argued that Christ, when tempted by Satan, *could have* yielded but that He was kept from sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This triggered a pamphlet and book war between Irving and his critics, the latter asserting that Christ was born inherently holy and that He *couldn't have* sinned.

As early as 1828, James Haldane published *A Refutation of the Heretical Doctrine promulgated by the Rev. Edward Irving* etc. Irving responded with *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord's Human Nature* (1830) and *Christ's Holiness in the Flesh* (1831).

The other controversy had to do with the Spirit's gifts. Irving was gradually becoming convinced that the early Christian gifts, such as healing and speaking in tongues, would be restored to the church at the time of the second advent. He may have been inspired by Alexander Scott, his later assistant, who as early as 1828 had come to the view that these

gifts were for every period of the church but that they had been withheld because of lack of faith.

Considering the fact that many theologians were then focused on Irving's "heresy," and that the newspapers of the day majored on the sensational healings and tongues of the charismatic revival then commencing, it's a wonder that the Irvingite journal *The Morning Watch* began developing Margaret's new idea as soon as it did!

Preliminary Issues

Some have charged that the pretrib rapture sprang from a tongues utterance. But my earlier books have carefully shown that Margaret didn't speak in tongues before August of 1830 — at least four months after she gave birth to pretrib. These two issues are unrelated and therefore should not be lumped together.¹

In the previous chapter Margaret's major emphases were applied to all of the 1829 issues of *The Morning Watch*. This application demonstrated that many of her points had already been taught by others. The present chapter will apply her ideas to later issues of the same journal. Since the focus will be on Irvingism's pretrib progress immediately following the lassie's pronouncement, it will be fitting to briefly look at an older book that greatly aroused Irving's interest in Bible prophecy. The work, noted earlier, is Lacunza's *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, and I merely want to clear up a general misconception about it.

Various writers have assumed that Irving quickly taught himself Spanish and that during the summer of 1826 he single-handedly translated Lacunza's Spanish work (more than 700 pages) into English. Irving was an eccentric genius, but not this much of a genius! But let him explain things in his own words:

¹See, for example, *The Incredible Cover-up*, pp. 56-62.

In Irving's preliminary discourse in this work, he revealed that "three or four years ago" (1822 or 1823) an English clergyman had been given a copy of "the Spanish edition of 1812." Irving said that during this time an "honoured friend of mine" and another person (both versed in Spanish) translated and revised "portions of it" to "prepare them for the press." And "we resolved that the two friends should proceed as before to complete the work, and that I should charge myself with the superintendence of its publication."²

Even though others did much, if not most, of the actual translation work, only Irving is listed on the title page as translator!

Another, and more serious, misconception is that the Irvingites did *not* teach a pretrib rapture. Brethren member R. A. Huebner, who has greatly influenced John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, and other leading pretrib teachers, said in 1973: "The Irvingites (1828-1834) never held the pretribulation rapture of any 'any-moment' views." In 1991 he had the same conclusion: "The Irvingite system was a complex" that can be found "in posttribulational writers."³

Even as scholarly a writer as Larry Crutchfield, who relied upon Walvoord and Ryrie whom Huebner influenced, assumed that the Irvingites taught neither imminency nor a pretrib rapture.⁴ It's amazing how many 20th century writers have ventured an opinion of the Irvingites and have based their opinion on secondary sources — secondary sources which, in turn, were based on even earlier secondary sources.

Although Ernest Sandeen, who died in 1982, was one of the few who listed the *greatest* primary source for Irvingism's pretrib development (*The Morning Watch*) in a bibliography, he quoted nothing of relevance from it. Instead, he rested

²Edward Irving, Preliminary Discourse, (Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc.), Vol. I, pp. xvi-xix.

³R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 74; *Precious Truths*, p. 201.

⁴Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism* (University Press of America, 1992), p. 189.

his case that the Irvingites were pretrib deficient on only secondary sources which, in turn, were based on earlier secondary sources.⁵

On the other hand, Clarence Bass wrote that it's probable that pretrib can be traced to the Irvingites. But he failed to pursue this.⁶

Defend-Darby-or-die dispensationalists, non-dispensationalists who mollify those who appear to have the most money and power, and even non-dispensationalists who don't care who they ruffle, can all have something in common: they can easily detour around pretribism's earliest development, *The Morning Watch*.

If your curiosity has been awakened, let me objectively analyze this Irvingite journal's remaining issues (1830-1833) for further evidence of Margaret's influence. The same format, outlining her main emphases, will be employed. Keep in mind that influential Huebner was able to flatly discredit the Irvingites by consistently overlooking *clear* pretrib teaching only a few pages (or even a few sentences) away from what he quoted!

If we carefully analyze the remaining issues of this short-lived British journal, we'll also know what the 19th century revisionist knew about them before he deftly diverted attention away from their development.

Margaret's Influence on the Irvingites

Now a very important question: how soon could Irving and his friends have known about Margaret's important revelation?

Andrew Drummond stated that on the last day of the final Albury prophecy conference in southern England —

⁵Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 64.

⁶Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 146.

July, 1830 — those attending were informed that a charismatic revival had begun in the vicinity of Margaret's home in western Scotland. A delegation to investigate everything soon headed north.⁷

Although, as noted, Irving mentioned in a June 2, 1830 letter that he had received a copy of Margaret's revelation, there were those who knew about her innovation soon after its arrival early in the year.

Robert Norton, who heard and recorded Margaret's words in person, quoted a May 18, 1830 letter written by Margaret's older sister Mary: "... the house has been filled with people every day from all parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. ..." Referring to Margaret's new end-time view, she added: "It is very striking that almost all that has been interpreted has been on the coming of Christ."⁸

With this in mind, let's look at the rest of the incredible Irvingite contribution, pausing briefly after *The Morning Watch's* September 1830 issue for a summary up to that point. And we'll occasionally reach back for items not previously covered.

I. A PARTIAL RAPTURE

Hal Lindsey has asserted, minus evidence, that the partial rapture view is a *recent* one.⁹

But evidence is now in the open that partial rapturism, based on Old Testament feasts, emerged before Margaret posited pretrib rapturism. And the Irvingites continued to promote a partial rapture before they began to adopt a pretrib rapture. In the following section, which features partial rapturism's supporting points, we'll note that even before the ground-breaking September 1830 issue of *The Morning*

⁷Andrew Landale Drummond, *Edward Irving and his Circle*, p. 135.

⁸Robert Norton, *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald* etc., pp. 125-6.

⁹Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture*, p. 26.

Watch, various writers employed Margaret's distinctive terminology and included what appear to be pretrib hints. The first supporting point:

A. "Firstfruits"

1. In March of 1830 Irving, expressing this concept, declared that "certain faithful ones, now upon the earth — few indeed, but certainly some — shall be delivered before the fiery trial commenceth. I believe that some, who are not ripe in faith . . . shall remain to be taught by the judgments. . . . These shall be God's witnesses in the midst of the awful scene and the seed of the Gentile church. . . ." ¹⁰

Margaret also spoke of "the fiery trial" and used "awful."

2. The next issue (June) saw an unidentified writer saying that "those alive . . . will be removed, changed, and caught up to meet him in the air; whilst those like the foolish will be left. . . ." "... some foreknown of God as children are left to stem the mighty torrent." ¹¹

3. In September, editor John Tudor referred to "the ascendancy of the last Antichrist, from which the Lord will deliver his faithful and waiting people. But some who will be ultimately saved have to endure this last extremity of trial. . . . The elect, whom his wiles would deceive if it were possible, and those who refuse to worship his image, are the foolish virgins of Matt. xxv.; who, though they want oil, . . . are not perhaps finally shut out, but may . . . be admitted to the millennial reign. . . ." ¹²

Margaret had also seen a prior rapture for "his people,"

¹⁰Edward Irving, "Signs of the Times, and the Characteristics of the Church" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1830), p. 162.

¹¹"S," "On the Parable of the Ten Virgins" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1830), pp. 367-8.

¹²John Tudor, "On Antichrist, its Nature and Time" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), p. 490.

with some of the “elect” (“foolish virgins”) left on earth.

4. The same issue had an unidentified writer saying that after the “rapture unto the Lord in the air,” the “foolish” virgins will be “shut out.”¹³

5. A later September article, by Irving, alluded to the Old Testament feasts and concluded that “the church doth now possess only the first-fruits — that is, the first ripe grains which could be formed into a sheaf, and presented in the temple as a wave-offering unto the Lord.”¹⁴

B. “Sealing”

While “sealing” is noticeably lacking in the 1830 issues of this journal, a June article by “S” briefly referred to persons being sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption.¹⁵

C. “Church/Israel Dichotomy”

A September 1830 article by a writer listed only as “C” said that it’s questionable whether “the believers of the Mosaic dispensation are to share the highest order of the eonial dignity” and likewise questionable “whether any Jews, or Gentiles, shall ever be exalted to the celestial Melchisedec rank of coheirship with Christ, at any period subsequent to his glorious epiphany.”¹⁶

It’s apparent that this unidentified Irvingite writer believed in a future millennium that would have different ranks.

¹³“T. W. C.,” “On the Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the Gathering of his Elect” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), pp. 590-1. The writer may have been Thomas William Chevalier or T. W. Cole, both of whom attended at least one Albury conference.

¹⁴Edward Irving, “The Church, with her Endowment of Holiness and Power” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), pp. 634-5.

¹⁵“S,” “On the Parable of the Ten Virgins” (*The Morning Watch*, June 1830), p. 366.

¹⁶“C,” “On the future Purpose of God toward the Gentiles of the present Dispensation” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), pp. 497, 509.

Since "C" didn't emphasize only "Jews" after the "epiphany," no church/Israel dichotomy in connection with a future tribulation was expressed.

II. A SECRET RAPTURE

If secrecy at a prior rapture is stated in the 1830 issues, it's a secret indeed. I couldn't find even a hint of secrecy.

III. A PRETRIB RAPTURE

Since the period now under analysis covers the time between Margaret's key revelation and the end of September 1830, let's apply three subpoints that were used when viewing earlier church periods:

A. A Future Tribulation

1. In the September issue, editor John Tudor wrote that "in these our own times, when the personal manifestation of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom draw near, Antichrist will at length take the form of a single person, assuming to himself all rule and authority in church and state. . . ."¹⁷

In this article Tudor seemed to give the impression that the reign of a future Antichrist would be nothing more than the final form of what he felt had been going on for quite some time.

2. Later on in the same September issue of *The Morning Watch*,¹⁸ the anonymous writer identified only as "Fidus" applied what he viewed as "the great tribulation" to only the "Laodicean church" (Rev. 3:14-22). He described the

¹⁷John Tudor, "On Antichrist, its Nature and Time" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), p. 481.

¹⁸"Fidus," "Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), pp. 510, 514.

Laodicean church as “the only one yet entirely future.” So it is evident that “Fidus” too held to a future tribulation.

B. The “Two Witnesses”

These issues are silent in regard to the witnesses.

C. The “Man Child”

No discussion of this could be found in the same issues.

What has been Uncovered?

It’s time now to evaluate what has been uncovered up to this point. Although Margaret Macdonald was hardly original with most of her emphases, she did contribute a brand-new idea that is still with us.

The first chapter in the present book has a lengthy discussion of the “Fidus” article (p. 8ff, see also Appendix C) recently quoted. Fidus clearly stated that “Philadelphia” will be raptured and “Laodicea” left on earth to endure “the great tribulation” — a pretribulation rapture.

While Margaret rested on the “two witnesses” symbol, “Fidus” rested on the “Philadelphia” symbol. Neither one was able to find a pretrib rapture in any *non-symbolic* statement of Scripture.

But the “Fidus” piece was just the start of Irvingite pretrib teaching. Now let’s examine *The Morning Watch’s* remaining issues:

I. A PARTIAL RAPTURE

It is interesting to watch the evolution of this new eschatology as the concept of a “split” rapture continued to appear on the pages of this leading British journal. The split rapture theory was supported by the following:

A. "Firstfruits"

1. In December 1830 John Tudor, again relying on Old Testament symbolism (in Isa. 17:6), commented that:

we are distinctly taught by this verse in Isaiah, that, though all the grapes which are gathered into the wine-press are trampled in one indiscriminate destruction, yet that there are gleanings left upon the vine, and a few berries upon the olive-tree. . . . They are very few, it is true, who do escape; but, however few, they demonstrate a principle for which we have often contended — namely, that in every judgment of God he has some of his own people whom he preserves as witnesses through the judgment. . . . And it establishes another point for which we have contended — namely, that as these few grapes, and berries, and ears, do outlive the utmost rage of the last Antichrist . . . it establishes the fact that the number who do resist him is considerable, and gives us hope of the final salvation of a portion of the church whom we dare not call unbelievers, but whom we must call the foolish virgins. . . .¹⁹

2. Two issues later (June 1831) found Tudor declaring that "all the minutiae of the Christian dispensation had been already acted out in the Jewish; and if we would study the typical import of the Jewish laws and rites and times, we should need no other record of the church. These are now nearly fulfilled; we are entered upon the last of the series, soon to be wound up by the Feast of Tabernacles. . . ."²⁰

3. A writer in the same issue reasoned (from Lev. 23): "If the waving of the wave-sheaf could only be fulfilled by the raising of the Lord Jesus, so the waving of the two wave-loaves, can only be fulfilled by the raising of the church. . . ."²¹

After this "waving" he seemed to waver:²² ". . . when we are brought to see the true import of the Feast of Tabernacles

¹⁹John Tudor, "The Perils of the Church, and the Judgment of the Nations" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1830), pp. 744-5.

²⁰John Tudor, "The People of God, in ancient, present, and future time" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), p. 254.

²¹Anon. writer, "Jesus the Head over all Things to his Church" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), p. 352.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 354.

we cannot but be struck with this introductory feast of Trumpets, remembering, 'the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised'"

4. June 1832 saw an anonymous article on the feast of tabernacles with this stunning statement: "The seven days of the feast typify seven years; and the thirteen bullocks, slain on the first day, indicate a confederacy of thirteen hostile powers, to be broken in the first of these seven years of the reign of Antichrist, and of his confederacy with Gog and Magog."²³

The article added: ". . . the bullocks slain during the seven days of the feast, denote the apostates and rebels which shall perish in that great tribulation which shall intervene between the translation of the saints to heaven and their coming down from heaven in the new Jerusalem."²⁴

This was the first time I'd found anyone projecting a *seven-year* tribulation! (As late as 1868 Darby was still teaching that "the casting down of Satan in Revelation xii. is before, and introductory of, the last tribulation" — a tribulation of only three and a half years.²⁵)

5. Another June writer stated: "The order and time of the events we derive from the Apocalypse, and find them coincide with the order of the feast days of the Jewish year." He said that "we now stand at the time of Harvest, and in continual expectation of the sounding of the seventh trumpet" — Revelation 11:15 — "which coincides with the Feast of Trumpets. . . ."²⁶

6. In September 1832 Tudor declared that "all the symbols of the book of Revelations [sic] are founded on types

²³Anon. writer, "The Tabernacle of God with Men; and the Feast of Tabernacles" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 262.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 269.

²⁵J. N. Darby, *Letters of J. N. D.* (Bible Truth Publishers, 1971 reprint), Vol. III, p. 403.

²⁶Anon. writer, "Present State of Prophetic Knowledge, and Progress in the Interpretation of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 382.

and symbols and prophecies of the Old Testament. . . ."²⁷

7. In March 1833 an unnamed writer said that "the types, histories, and ordinances of the Jewish people" are "significant and instructive."²⁸

Have you spotted the rapid development? In 1828, as previously noted, John Tudor felt he was then facing "our day of atonement." In 1831 and 1832, a couple writers saw significance in the feast of trumpets, and one of them also saw the possibility of a prior rapture in a *second* fulfillment of the (even earlier) feast of Pentecost (the church's "firstfruits" tied with the wave-loaves of the "firstfruits," Lev. 23:20).

But I've saved, for this moment, an even more exciting suggestion someone made while these Irvingites were having a "field day" with the harvest/feasts of Leviticus 23; in June of 1831 the unknown writer based the prior rapture on the feast of "First-fruits"! He said the first resurrection covered the firstfruits and a slightly later harvest.²⁹

So within a few years the Irvingites shifted their rapture from feast No. 6 (of Lev. 23's seven feasts) to feast No. 5 to feast No. 4 and even to feast No. 3! But how could the "firstfruits" (No. 3) be caught up *before* they were "waved" (No. 4) and *before* the trumpet sounds (No. 5, I Thess. 4:16)?

Although the late 19th century revisionist condemned the Irvingites for excessive "Judaizing" (applying Old Testament elements to the church that the New Testament doesn't apply), modern dispensationalists have done the same thing and have had the same sort of disagreement.

C. I. Scofield (1917) based his pretrib rapture on the feast of the firstfruits, No. 3.³⁰

²⁷John Tudor, "The Book of the Church" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), p. 82.

²⁸Anon. writer, "The Alphabet of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), p. 141.

²⁹Anon. writer, "Jesus the Head over all Things to his Church" (*The Morning Watch*, June 1831), p. 330.

³⁰C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 156, note 4.

Although John Walvoord sees a sharp distinction between the church and Old Testament saints, and says that there is nothing in the Old Testament suggestive of a pretrib rapture, his 1966 book based a pretrib aspect of the first resurrection on feast No. 3.³¹

Hal Lindsey's 1983 book has a pretrib rapture chart based on the same feasts. Even though he doesn't reveal which feast is the significant one, his pretrib rapture lies between feast No. 3 and feast No. 7.³²

Another pretrib date-setter, Edgar Whisenant, said in 1988 that the rapture would happen in 1988. His rapture was based on feast No. 5.³³

B. "Sealing"

1. In June 1831 "Fidus" wrote that "the sealed ones" are "the first-fruits of the harvest unto God (Rev. vii. 3, xiv. 14). . . ." ³⁴

2. In March of the following year, "Fidus" spoke of "the great tribulation (Rev. vii. 14) into which the sealed ones shall never enter." ³⁵

3. The June 1832 issue had Edward Irving saying that "it hath been testified that the completeness of the sealing is not yet in any one amongst us." ³⁶

A few pages later Irving added:

³¹John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, pp. 36, 39; *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 298.

³²Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture*, pp. 160-1.

³³Edgar C. Whisenant, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988* (World Bible Society, 1988), p. 8. His upside down companion work, *On Borrowed Time*, p. 5, stated that all seven feasts can be applied to the church.

³⁴"Fidus," "Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Churches" (*The Morning Watch*, June 1831), p. 276.

³⁵"Fidus," "Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1832), p. 42.

³⁶Edward Irving, "An Interpretation of the fourteenth Chapter of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 310.

Let us have the eagle's eye, by receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost, for only such shall soar aloft into the heavenly glory when He appeareth. . . . the one hundred forty and four thousand . . . have every one of them received that uplifting and enwrapping of the Spirit, which carried John into the vision and understanding of heavenly things; which is the effect of the sealing with the Father's seal in their foreheads, being the reality of that into which we are baptized, "to sit with Christ in the heavenly places. . . ." A church of spiritual seers and singers there shall be. . . . And none besides these sealed ones shall have such Divine sight, and knowledge. . . .³⁷

4. The same issue discussed Revelation 7: ". . . the beginning of the sealing in this chapter extends back to cover the sixth seal (vi. 12), while the latter part of it reaches forward to cover the great tribulation (Rev. vii. 14; Matt. xxiv. 21, 29; Dan. xii. 1, 3; Rev. xi. 18, 19, xix. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9)."³⁸

5. We've noted that Newton (1733), Irving (1826), and Tudor (1828), aware that the early church was empowered for anything but a quick fly-away, had expressed the traditional view that "sealing" is for *preservation* on earth. But as early as September 1829, Tudor had suggested a second meaning: *exemption* for the "first-fruits" (via prior rapture) from the last tiny fraction of the tribulation — a rapture that would occur at the "Day of Atonement" before the "Feast of Tabernacles." As the gap between their rapture and their advent was enlarged, the Irvingites emphasized the second meaning more and more, as we've just seen.

6. Under the earliest definition of sealing, Britain had long believed it had a special status. Viewing Revelation 12's "woman" as the church and concluding that his own offshore homeland had been destined to be a haven during continental Europe's 1260-year reign of terror, 14th century writer Walter Brute stated: "Unto this place fled the woman. . . ."³⁹

³⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 317-19.

³⁸Anon. writer, "Present State of Prophetic Knowledge" etc. (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 371.

³⁹Walter Brute, translation in John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* etc. (London: Company of Stationers, 1684), Vol. 1, p. 548.

7. Even after the emergence of a small-gap prior rapture, Britain was still seen as a “most favored” region. In December 1829 Tudor wrote: “. . . the name of God has been most frequently blasphemed, and human nature been most basely degraded, in this quarter of the earth. Here, therefore, shall the severest judgments of God fall. . . .” In spite of this he added: “. . . here also, I think, shall the New Jerusalem be planted. . . .”⁴⁰

8. But the same issue saw Irving generously giving the judgments to others: “. . . the nation which in the Apocalypse is sealed from the judgments and destruction of the other nations is this nation of Great Britain. . . .”⁴¹

9. Note this Tudor interpretation (Dec., 1830) of Isaiah 23: “‘The burden of Tyre’ (xxiii.) refers, we think, to England. . . .”⁴²

10. In September 1832 this journal referred to “the most favoured part of Christendom, even Britain.”⁴³

11. The December issue saw British witnesses in Revelation 11: “. . . this our island, where it hath been testified that the witnesses shall be slain.”⁴⁴

12. In the 1840’s “sealing” was given an Irvingite (as well as a British) accent. Irvingism historian Edward Miller had this to say in 1878: “They asserted that, in order to escape the great tribulation which is coming, it is necessary to be outwardly sealed by . . . the apostles” of the (Irvingite) Catholic Apostolic Church. “When this Rite was definitely determined upon . . . Mr. Cardale announced his readiness

⁴⁰John Tudor, “On the Interpretation of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 575.

⁴¹Edward Irving, “Signs of the Times” etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 642.

⁴²John Tudor, “The Perils of the Church” etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1830), p. 743.

⁴³Anon. writer, “Germinant Fulfilment of Prophecies” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), p. 48.

⁴⁴Edward Irving, “An Interpretation of the fourteenth Chapter of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1832), p. 283.

to convey 'the seal' to those who sought for it. Accordingly, on May 31, 1847, he sealed . . . the Ministers who desired it. . . . On . . . June 9th, and on June 28th, he sealed the rest of the faithful who so wished. . . ."⁴⁵

13. Miller reported a still later development in regard to Irvingism's "sealing":

As 1866 drew near, the utterances of the Prophets became more ominous. The deaths of several Apostles made the Members of the Body imagine all the more that the Lord had summoned them to accompany Him on His Return, and to do work in the next world preparatory to His approach. Accordingly, as these Apostles had not been able each to seal his quota of 12,000 before his death, the belief spread very widely through the Body that their sealing would be carried on in Paradise. Several utterances of the Prophets were to this effect. . . . in order to find a way of escape from the difficulty, they resorted to the strange supposition . . . that those Apostles who had not made up the number for their Tribes would continue their office of sealing in the next world.⁴⁶

C. "Church/Israel Dichotomy"

Up through September of 1830 only a "church/church dichotomy," in regard to a future tribulation, was observed among the Irvingites. But a change was in store.

1. A "Fidus" opinion in *The Morning Watch* (Dec., 1831) involved a future, earthly millennium: "We are the house of David, which shall take precedence of every other in the day of the Lord; and his whole house are to reign and judge, having under them the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the house of Judah and Israel. . . ." He also referred to "the house of David gathered out of all nations, as a thing quite pre-eminent over the glory of the literal seed of Abraham in the day of Zion's comfort."⁴⁷

⁴⁵Edward Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism*, Vol. I, p. 251.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁴⁷"Fidus," "Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), pp. 268-9.

2. The first “church/*Israel* dichotomy” (tied to a future tribulation) that I’ve found in Irvingism appeared in the same (Dec., 1831) issue. John Hooper, a clergyman who had participated in the Albury prophetic discussions, spoke of “our gathering together unto him” and tied this with I Thessalonians 4:17. He then wrote about “those things which shall occur after God’s waiting people are gathered unto him, when that determined to be poured upon the Jews shall be accomplished. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, &c.”⁴⁸

This was a reference to Matthew 24’s tribulation. (R. A. Huebner, incidentally, admits that Darby didn’t believe that “the elect in Matt. 24 were Jewish saints” until “1832 or 1833.”⁴⁹)

Hooper’s reason for singling out “the Jews” for the tribulation was in his preceding paragraph. He said that Matthew 24’s “parallel text in Luke” (which, unlike Matthew and Mark, mentioned Jerusalem’s 70 AD destruction and which Hooper viewed as a type) will have a “literal” fulfillment in the way that it had a “symbolical” fulfillment during the French Revolution. But when he discussed the French upheaval, he referred only to what was poured out in connection with the “Papal period” and said nothing about the Jews!

3. In March 1832 an article written by “F” mentioned “the sure missionary efforts of the Jews” during the reign of “the beast and false prophet,” adding (unlike previous Irvingite interpretation) that the 144,000 will be sealed “Jews.”⁵⁰

4. In the September 1832 issue of *The Morning Watch* editor John Tudor wrote that the “Jews” as well as the “foolish virgins” will miss the rapture and become “followers of

⁴⁸John Hooper, “The Church’s Expectation” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), pp. 323-4.

⁴⁹R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, pp. 97, 99.

⁵⁰“F,” “The Fall of Babylon” (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1832), pp. 65, 76.

Antichrist" during the "greatest of all tribulations."⁵¹

5. In March 1833 a writer mentioned the only group that will be excluded from the rapture: "the Jews."⁵²

II. A SECRET RAPTURE

The pretrib rapture eventually became known as the "secret rapture." This label was based on the presupposition that only certain persons would have privileged visibility or knowledge during the occurrence of this catching up. With our privilege of viewing actual wording in *The Morning Watch*, let's see if we can spot any secrecy that others haven't been privileged to observe.

1. In March 1831 "Dr. S." (his name was a secret) concluded "that, the Lord's coming *to* and *with* the saints implying two things, it must not be assumed as a matter of course that there is little or no interval between them, or that the former is that which 'every eye shall see.'"⁵³

2. In the following June issue, "Fidus" mentioned that some will "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. . . ." Then he spoke of the "people of God who are left, and who alone shall know the event happened to their brethren. . . ."⁵⁴

3. Another secret person, "W. L.," stated in the December 1831 issue that at the rapture Christ will "descend into our atmosphere — invisibly, perhaps, at first. . . ."⁵⁵

4. The same issue saw John Hooper basing secrecy on the Apostle Paul (who was viewed as a "type"): "If the ques-

⁵¹John Tudor, "On the Songs of Heaven" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), pp. 6-7.

⁵²Anon. writer, "The Alphabet of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar. 1833), p. 147.

⁵³"Dr. S.," "Notes on the Parables of our Lord respecting the Judgment" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1831), p. 68.

⁵⁴"Fidus," "Commentary on the seven Apocalyptic Churches" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), p. 277.

⁵⁵"W. L.," "On the Restoration and Conversion of the Tribes of Israel" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), p. 299.

tion should be asked, 'How shall the Lord manifest himself to us, and not unto the world?' I think it may be answered by referring to the history of his appearing unto Paul. By comparing Acts ix. 7 with xxii. 9, it appears, that though the men that were with him heard a voice, they understood it not; and though they saw a light, they saw not the Saviour. But Paul both saw him and understood his voice."⁵⁶

5. Still another anonymous writer had this to say in the June 1832 issue:

His coming . . . is a joy which those only who look for his coming are prepared to feel (Heb. ix. 28). To those who are watching and praying, and expecting their Lord, and to them only, will Christ be manifested at the *beginning* of the DAY of his coming, when he comes as the sign of the Son of Man (Matt. xxiv.) as the morning star (Rev. ii. 28, xxii. 16). To the rest of the church, and to the world, this first appearance will be but as a meteor or cloud of radiance, preternatural and unaccountable, but unintelligible.⁵⁷

III. A PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE

We again arrive at the aspect of Irvingite teaching that present-day pretrib dispensationalists deem the most important — the most important to deny. They've been assured by Scofield, Ironside, and other respected 20th century leaders that Irving and his followers *never* taught eschatological escapism that could be viewed as pretrib rapturism.

In previous pages I have reviewed Margaret Macdonald's early 1830 teaching of pretrib. We've also noted that in September of 1830 *The Morning Watch* publicly taught the same view. And in the preceding sections we've seen further evidence of this doctrine.

The Irvingites came to believe that *church* members are

⁵⁶John Hooper, "The Church's Expectation" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), p. 323, footnote.

⁵⁷Anon. writer, "Present State of Prophetic Knowledge" etc. (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 374.

seen in various symbols in the book of Revelation. As we complete our analysis of *The Morning Watch*, note the times that the “two witnesses” and the “man child” represent *church* members. Since these two symbols precede the 1260 days of the tribulation (Rev. 12), they were used by this British group to express a pretrib rapture.

It's now my responsibility to reveal the rest of the long-covered-up Irvingite record:

1. In June 1831 “Fidus” referred to “the great tribulation from which those dead in Christ, and those who shall then be alive and looking for him, shall be exempted, by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. . . .”⁵⁸

Several pages later, while echoing his monumental September 1830 article, “Fidus” again said that “the church of Philadelphia” — and not “Laodicea” — “is that which is caught up to meet the Lord. . . .”⁵⁹

2. We now arrive at a June 1831 article so stunning, so amazing, so incredible (I can't think of enough expressions) that I'll quote quite a bit of it. The author was Edward Irving, the head of the Irvingites. Here we find Irving developing what we find Darby repeating (without giving credit) in 1839! Irving wrote:

. . . we find that the Christ of the Second Psalm, into whose hands the inheritance of the earth is given and the subjugation of the Gentiles, is not the Son of Man merely, but all those who are united to him by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, “born of God, sons of God” (Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5). And therefore we with him are called Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12); and the great mystery of which Paul maketh such great account is, “Christ in us” (Col. i. 27): and if the new truth, contained in the Scriptures which were written after the day of Pentecost, were to be expressed in our word, it would be this, ‘That the mystery of God in the Christ is not completed in one person, Jesus of Nazareth, but in many persons, — Jesus and the elect; the head and the members; the second Adam, and his seed elected in him before the beginning of the

⁵⁸“Fidus,” “Commentary on the seven Apocalyptic Epistles” (*The Morning Watch*, June 1831), p. 284.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 287-8.

world, and now gathering up into him from all the ends of the earth, through all generations, until the fixed and determinate portion shall have been completed.⁶⁰

On the next page Irving added that:

with this key the Old-Testament prophecies which speak of Christ must be interpreted, or else they will not speak plainly; and especially those prophecies which speak of the pregnant woman: to all which an explicit key is given to us in the xiith chapter of the Revelation; where, though the child is spoken of as one (ver. 5), it is also described as many (ver. 11), who overcame the accuser; and when that number is accomplished, there are still a remnant of her seed, whom the dragon doth persecute and seek to destroy (ver. 17). This two-fold company — the one gathered before, and the other after the travailing woman is cast out into the *wilderness*, which I take to be the same with the *field* of our Prophet ([Micah] iv. 10) — do together constitute the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb, which cometh down from heaven.⁶¹

Here we see a “first” company gathered (the *singular* child that is “caught up”) before the other “members” of the child endure the 1260-day “wilderness” — thus a “dismembered” bride.

But Irving failed to answer some questions: (1) If the “man child” originally and literally referred to Christ and to His first-century ascension, did any Christians (part of His “body”) then accompany Him to Heaven? (2) If the “man child” symbolizes a pretrib rapture at Revelation 12:5, wouldn’t the “Head” have to be on earth then with all of His “members” to have the *entire* “man child” caught up? (3) If the church is already joined to its “Head” (mystically or spiritually), why does the church need to be with Him in person at Revelation 12:5 (and not later)? (Unless, of course, one presumes first of all that only others need a “wilderness” experience!)

Please observe what problems are encountered if part

⁶⁰Edward Irving, “Interpretation of the Old-Testament Prophecies quoted in the New” (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), p. 301.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 302.

of a symbol ("caught up") is taken literally and part of it (the "man child") is taken non-literally!

Three pages later Irving referred to "the children of whom the church is now in pain to be delivered; who are caught up to God and to his throne; and who come with him to rule the earth with a rod of iron."⁶²

3. A chart was included with an article in the same (June) issue: "The second advent of our Lord and the resurrection of the saints" was followed by "A time of trouble unparalleled" which in turn was followed by "Christ coming with his saints to punish his enemies."⁶³

4. In December 1831 a nameless writer expressed imminence as well as pretrib: "... we miss the true object of faith and hope in the coming of the Lord, not only when we overleap it altogether, but when we interpose any screen whatever; when we look for any event of persecution or tribulation, for any combination of kings, any gathering of people, any manifestation of Antichrist."⁶⁴

On the following page he tied I Thessalonians 4:15 to Revelation 11:15; in other words, he equated the coming in the first reference with a verse in the "witnesses" chapter that precedes the 1260 days.⁶⁵

5. In the same issue "Fidus" repeatedly expressed the view under discussion. He said that after "Philadelphia" is "caught up, that which withholdeth shall have been removed; all, on pain of death, shall be obliged to receive the mark of the beast. . . ." "Let us, then, walk with the Lamb *whithersoever* he goeth; that, being translated, we may in the pavilion of God escape this desolation of the wicked one and that universal hour of trial. . . . that as the church of Philadelphia, in

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁶³"F," "On the Structure of the Apocalypse and the Events of the Sixth and Seventh Vials" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), p. 471.

⁶⁴Anon. writer, "The Hour of Christ's Appearance" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), p. 253.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 254.

preserving the word of patience, refuses to let it go; so her being *preserved* from the hour of trial is not her being enabled to bear it, but her being exempt from undergoing it. . . .” “ . . . the faith of him that believeth the words of God concerning the kingdoms of Christ and of Antichrist shall not be tried by that awful apocalypse of the latter. . . . the saints . . . have been caught up . . . under the second woe . . .” (Rev. 11:13). “ . . . translated before the supremacy of the man of sin. . . .” “ . . . if Enoch represent Philadelphia” and “if Lamech represent the Laodicean church . . . Laodicea shall come short of translation. . . .” “Thou mayest be translated on the morrow. . . .”⁶⁶

6. In March 1832 an anonymous article mentioned those who “shall have no part in the first resurrection and translation of the saints, but must abide the great tribulation and the fiery trial about to come upon the earth.” Also: “The day of the Lord . . . is a long period, of seven or of fourteen years; during which the vials . . . shall be poured out by the risen saints. . . . This whole time is the second advent . . . beginning with the reward of his saints, and raising them to the clouds, from whence He has cast Satan down to the earth. . . .” He went on: “ . . . the translation for the living . . . of which we may daily expect the accomplishment. . . . every immediate precursor of the day of the Lord has appeared. . . .” He added: “It shall be a time of trouble such as never was. . . . The man-child, both Christ personal and Christ mystical, shall then have been translated. . . . During this most horrible time of the reign of the last Antichrist, the risen and translated saints shall be with Christ in the clouds of heaven, from whence Satan and his hosts have been precipitated. . . .”⁶⁷

7. The same (March) issue saw this further “Fidus” contribution: “ . . . we who wait for the Son of Man shall not be

⁶⁶“Fidus,” “Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), pp. 260-1, 264, 276-7, 279, 281, 289-90, 292.

⁶⁷Anon. writer, “Christ the Morning Star; and Lucifer Son of the Morning” (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1832), pp. 3, 5, 12-14.

on the earth but in the air during the period of Laodicea. . . .” Coming close to what pretribs teach today, he wrote that because of Laodicea’s “refusal to escape from Sodom when God called unto Philadelphia ‘Come up hither’ she is to pass through a fiery trial during the hour of the beast” and also referred to “the door opened in heaven (Rev. iv. 1). This is the door which Christ opened at his resurrection, and no man can shut (Rev. iii. 8); for Philadelphia shall be caught up into the temple of God. . . .” (!) Near the end, he addressed “Philadelphia” like this: “. . . when thou shalt put Laodicea to shame, being translated without seeing death, by that faith of Enoch whereby he pleased God, Satan will not stand the victory of thy rapture.”⁶⁸

8. Another March article, by “F,” played the same tune: “. . . the Second Advent of our blessed Saviour takes place. It is previous to the ‘time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time’ (Dan. xii. 1). . . . The Second Advent is described 1 Thess. iv. 16. . . .”⁶⁹

9. In June 1832 an unidentified author declared: “Constant watchfulness and hourly expectation is the only safe attitude of the church now. . . .” “This personal Antichrist is the last beast. . . . Before the rage of this last persecution, the faithful followers of the Lamb are translated to glory: these are the wise virgins, and the wise alone understand (Dan. xii. 10).”⁷⁰

10. A few pages later an unknown writer stated: “There is a band which is counted worthy to escape the things that are coming on the earth; while others are left to witness in the furnace which Antichrist will heat seven-fold.”⁷¹

⁶⁸“Fidus,” “Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles” (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1832), pp. 23, 37, 45, 50.

⁶⁹“F,” “The Fall of Babylon” (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1832), pp. 68-9.

⁷⁰Anon. writer, “On the Sacred Numbers” (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), pp. 279, 281.

⁷¹Anon. writer, “The Voice of God” (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 303.

11. Edward Irving (same issue) wrote that “his church baptized with the Holy Ghost . . . , hindering and hampering and effectually keeping down . . . the attempts of Antichrist to shew himself” will be “translated unto glory: whereupon Antichrist develops himself, ‘that which did let being taken out of the way,’ . . .”⁷²

12. A few articles later in the June, 1832 issue, an unknown author said that “the resurrection of the saints is appropriately symbolized by the birth of the man-child.”⁷³

The writer added that “the true waiting church” will be “raised to the clouds of heaven” at the “Feast of Trumpets.”⁷⁴

13. In September 1832 John Tudor commented that “some of these elect ones shall . . . be left in the great tribulation . . . after the translation of the saints. . . .” He added that there is “nothing further to expect before the actual coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven.”⁷⁵

14. This was followed by an article in which Irving said that “the man child, consisting of many persons, who overcome, is caught up to the throne of God, thence to wield the thunders of its power against the dragon and his angels, and cast them down from heaven” — Revelation 12:9.⁷⁶

15. Again, as the trend continued, in September 1832 an unnamed writer, after referring to “the literal time of 1260 days, or three years and a half,” declared that “we have no doubt that that period does not commence till the moment of the translation of the saints. . . .”⁷⁷

⁷²Edward Irving, “An Interpretation of the fourteenth Chapter of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832, p. 309.

⁷³Anon. writer, “Present State of Prophetic Knowledge” etc. (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 373.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁷⁵John Tudor, “On the Songs of Heaven” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), pp. 11-12.

⁷⁶Edward Irving, “Interpretation of the fourteenth Chapter of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), p. 27.

⁷⁷Anon. writer, “Germinant Fulfilment of Prophecies” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1832), p. 48.

16. In December 1832 Irving's continuing series on Revelation 14 said that those who fail to become part of the "bride" will experience the "spears and swords of Antichrist."⁷⁸

17. In March 1833 an anonymous writer wrote that "after the translation of the saints to that region of heaven from which the evil angels shall then be cast down," the "two bands of elect" that will be left on earth during "the utmost rage of Satan and of Antichrist" will be "the foolish virgins" and "the Jewish people."⁷⁹

18. In the same issue Irving echoed what he had said in June of 1831 (see III-2), that "the man-child born of the woman is first spoken of as one, and immediately after as many" — again an indication that he saw a pretrib rapture in Revelation 12:5.⁸⁰

19. Also in March an unknown author wrote that when "the saints are gathered and translated . . . Satan will then have been cast to the earth."⁸¹

In the previous chapter we learned that the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11 were viewed as a church symbol by Irving (1827) and by Margaret (1830).

In the present chapter, covering the Irvingite development up to and through 1833, we've noted a change. While some still saw the witnesses as significant, the basis for a pretrib rapture seemed to rest increasingly on the "man child" symbol in Revelation 12 — a symbol which, unlike the fluctuating "witnesses" symbol, could be seen in only a *pretrib* setting.

We've observed even earlier that leading 19th century scholars, Brethren as well as non-Brethren, uniformly cred-

⁷⁸Edward Irving, "An Interpretation of the fourteenth Chapter of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1832), p. 281.

⁷⁹Anon. writer, "The Glory of God in the Land of the Living" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), pp. 30-31.

⁸⁰Edward Irving, "On the Prophetical Aspect of All God's Works and Ways" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), p. 62.

⁸¹Anon. writer, "The Alphabet of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), p. 147.

ited someone in Irving's circle with pretrib; credit for Darby was notably lacking.

During the present century, however, leading pretrib dispensationalists, knowingly or unknowingly guided by the origin revisionism of a century ago (the uncovering of which is the main reason for the present book), have uniformly wished to credit Darby.

The same modern group has claimed that the Irvingites never taught a pretrib rapture, a collective assertion completely disproven by what has just been presented.

The same group, moreover, has also asserted that Darby never would have borrowed pretrib from the Irvingites, especially since he disagreed with some of their other beliefs that he felt were unorthodox and aberrational.

But this is like saying that an anti-astrology person would never read just the front page of a newspaper and skip the horoscope! Or that someone who hates ice cream would never go to a cafeteria that serves it and eat only a salad!

One can find examples of discrimination elsewhere in dispensationalism's history. Ernest Sandeen pointed out that Darby's American disciples of a hundred years ago would often take what they wanted from his "theological bag" (e.g., his pretrib rapture) and disregard his other beliefs.⁸²

William Menzies has stated that "it is significant that the eschatology of the Assemblies of God is derived directly from the categories of C. I. Scofield" — even though this charismatic denomination would feel free to reject some of his other beliefs.⁸³

And not a few charismatics of the 1970's accepted the pretrib rapture in Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* even though the same book declared⁸⁴ that the prophets of

⁸²Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, pp. 101-2.

⁸³William W. Menzies, *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, Vinson Synan, editor (Logos International, 1975), p. 85.

⁸⁴Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 89.

today do not get revelations straight from God — including, conceivably, revelations of a pretrib rapture!

So, if charismatics could borrow from non-charismatics, who's to say that (non-charismatic) Darby couldn't have appropriated (charismatic) Irvingism's rapture (which belonged to Margaret) while rejecting the rest of its smorgasbord? The next chapter, separating 19th century non-fiction from 20th century fiction, will show what Darby actually said, and when.

Many present-day writers, especially non-charismatics, have emphasized two well-known aspects of Irving's ministry: the "tongues" and his "heresy" concerning Christ's human nature. They've claimed that because of these aspects, Darby was justified in rejecting the Irvingite movement and that he never would have gotten his pretrib view from such a source.

But the same writers have been unaware of two long-overlooked facts: (1) that during Darby's earliest pretrib development, he was markedly silent on these Irvingite aspects, and (2) that only decades later, after many had credited the Irvingites, did Darby's defenders emphasize these aspects as a "red herring" — guilt by association — hoping that listeners would believe that "unorthodox" Irvingites could never have influenced "orthodox" Darby or (better yet, since unorthodoxy in itself wouldn't disprove the *existence* of pretrib) hoping that listeners would believe that the Irvingites *never* taught pretrib, period.

Since these highlighted Irvingite aspects have been fully discussed in many other books, there is no need for me to elaborate further. Instead, it will be more enlightening to share some facets of the Irvingites that are still practically unknown:

Miscellany

In *The Morning Watch* of March 1830, a writer identified only as "W. L." seemed to be teaching human pre-exist-

ence. He wrote that "whatever is shewn in type (whether it be exhibited in the persons or the names of men, in natural things, or in symbolical figures) previously existed in the heavens, however the type may represent what is besides to be fulfilled at a time future to its development."⁸⁵

The September 1830 issue saw "C" projecting the following:

As Adam . . . "peopled the world," so shall Christ, in the glorious company of his holy members, people the universe: as Eve was the "mother of all living" in this state of forfeit-life, so shall the church become the mother of generations upon generations yet unborn, the sinless inhabitants of innumerable spheres, never tainted with sin, never clouded with sorrow; where death has no name, and falsehood is unknown. I believe, on this kind of argument, that the earthly process of the evolution of independent beings — that the birth of men according to nature — will for ever continue, in the purity then accomplished by the clean water of Ezek. xxxvi. 25 — namely, *within the body of the holy Jewish church, with its proselytes of all nations*: for (as it is written in the last chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, ver. 22) "a little one shall become a thousand in that day, and a small one a strong nation. . . ."⁸⁶

After stating that the ancient, occultic ("hidden meaning") Cabala rested on a "foundation" that was "stable," an unrevealed June 1832 writer spoke of Biblical items having a "hidden meaning."⁸⁷

In a later issue (March 1833) Edward Irving commented:

. . . as to all manner of speculations about the inhabitants of the sun, and moon, and stars, I consider them to be as idle and fanciful as the speculations of the middle ages, concerning the number of angels which could occupy a point of space. That they are prepared for the habitation and possession of corporeal intelligencies like man, I do

⁸⁵"W. L.," "On the Typical Import of Many of the Historical Records of the Old-Testament Scriptures" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1830), pp. 101-2.

⁸⁶"C," "On the future Purpose of God toward the Gentiles of the present Dispensation" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), p. 507.

⁸⁷Anon. writer, "On the Sacred Numbers" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1832), p. 274.

believe; but that there are in existence at present any such corporeal intelligencies, I do not believe, because I have no ground of reason or of revelation for believing so: but I believe that the Son of man is Lord of them all, and shall people them all in his own time with material creatures, holding of the type, and standing under the dominion of the First-born from the dead, and the church of the First-born . . . princes of the royal blood . . . for the dominion of that visible, material substance of heaven and earth. . . .⁸⁸

The Irvingite leader added:

. . . when the dispensation of the thousand years shall close . . . Christ, having now completed his chosen ones, shall go forth with his spouse, and, through the mystery of that union of love which hath no similitude but in the union of the Father with the Son, shall multiply intelligent creatures no longer by creation . . . but by generation, that most holy and most mysterious act, from which the Son arose before all times; that relation which uniteth the Father with the Son for ever. . . .⁸⁹

An article in the same (March 1833) issue asserted that the "Zodiac" will "bring out at length from Heathen science a demonstration of Scripture chronology perfectly satisfactory and conclusive. . . ."⁹⁰

Having noted these quotes, it's easy for us to conclude that the Irvingites weren't frightened by mysterious topics. An unknown writer in the last (June 1833) issue stated: "Even now we are daily led forward into mysteries heretofore unknown, and joys such as we could not till now comprehend. . . ."⁹¹

If they felt they were able to solve the most mystical, mystifying, and mysterious subjects, developing a pretribulation rapture must have seemed like child's play to them!

And, in cult-like fashion, they viewed other Christians

⁸⁸Edward Irving, "On the Prophetic Aspect" etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), p. 55.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁹⁰Anon. writer, "On the Chaldean and Oriental Zodiacs" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1833), p. 220.

⁹¹Anon. writer, "The Church of the First-born Enrolled in Heaven" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1833), p. 231.

as far below themselves. Another unnamed writer stated bluntly:

It matters not whether the names and books and creeds and lives and doctrines of Luther, or Calvin, or Wicliff, or Knox, in days of old, or the more recent ones of Poole, Mant, Henry, Scott, or Clarke, or of Whitfield, Wesley, Gill, Brown, or Doddridge, be the standard lifted up and followed by the tribes of modern idolaters; . . . the variety of names and tribes . . . only serve to denote more truly the name by which the mixed multitude of modern Moabites love to be distinguished, — the Evangelical World.⁹²

This chapter has featured the prophetic development of the Irvingites, one of the most influential — and one of the most overlooked — religious groups of the past!

But facts that are even more electrifying are waiting to be aired in the next chapter!

⁹² Anon. writer, "Unaccomplished Prophecies now fulfilling" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1833), p. 243.

IV DARBY'S EARLY WORKS

It's time now to begin thinking about the 19th century plot to manipulate history and create a totally new version of pretrib beginnings.

The plotter's most important qualification: being thoroughly familiar with the pretrib development of the Irvingites so that he could present them in the worst possible light, discredit them, and credit his own group with the same end-time view.

When the plot comes to mind, one necessarily thinks about the Brethren. (Outsiders often call them the "Plymouth Brethren," a label traced to one of their early centers at Plymouth, England.) Their best-known prophecy teacher and pretrib promoter was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882).

Pretrib dispensationalists have long claimed that Darby, with no help from others, derived certain "truths" from the Bible — "truths" which, when put together, reportedly resulted in the concept of a rapture before a future tribulation.

And what were Darby's underlying beliefs? After giving his opinion that the *sources* for many of Darby's ideas may never be known, Larry Crutchfield¹ lists three main beliefs that dispensationalists from Darby's time to the present

¹Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism*, pp. 17, 28-33.

day have necessarily embraced: (1) a church/Israel distinction, (2) interpreting Scripture literally, and (3) the glory of God is history's goal.

In the same section Crutchfield quotes leading dispensationalist Charles Ryrie who wrote that the church/Israel distinction is the *best* way to determine whether or not someone is a dispensationalist — the most important criterion.²

Crutchfield then includes a quote from the “dean” of pretrib dispensationalists, John Walvoord, who declared that this belief is one of the most significant distinctions of all.³

He also quotes Clarence Bass who also concluded that dispensationalism has its roots in Darby's distinction between the church and Israel.⁴ Dispensationalism defines “Israel” as those who have ethnic ties to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or those who are part of Judaism.

Darby watchers are well aware that this early Brethren leader fervently expected Christ's return, that he warned about judgments that would fall on the Gentiles at the end of the church age, and that he believed in a future, literal, earthly millennium of 1000 years, the center of which would be the ancient city of Jerusalem.

Darby's Early Thoughts

So that you can see for yourself what fascinated this influential Brethren leader and writer, and also learn how his development was shaped, I will now list some of John Darby's actual thoughts within quotation marks (with just enough of my own words added for clarity):

1. “the coming of the Lord” (after the “day of grace”)

²Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Moody Press, 1965), pp. 44-5, 132.

³John F. Walvoord, “Dispensational Premillennialism” (*Christianity Today*, Sep., 1958), p. 13.

⁴Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, p. 127.

has always been "the great object" of the church's "hope and desire"

2. "the reign of the saints and the elect" is known as "*the millennium*"

3. "close at hand" are the "great Gentile judgments"

4. "When the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles, and summed up the present dispensation of testimony . . . he will . . . turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people the Jews"

5. "the election according to grace, who still are faithful amongst the Gentiles"

6. "the last Antichrist"

7. the "restoration" of "the Jews . . . to their own land"

8. "an ark of testimony in the Jewish nation"

9. Christ will "sit upon the throne of David" in "Jerusalem . . . using in this judgment and government of the earth his risen saints"

10. "the Jerusalem on earth, with the house of Jacob, and all the nations shall enjoy that fulness of peace and joy, that millennial reign of righteousness"

11. "the outward visible churches, those great idols of Christendom"

12. "the present Gentile dispensation"

13. "the present spiritual dispensation, which God hath interposed between a dispensation of a local and typical character upon the one hand, and a dispensation yet to be, of a universal and real character upon the other; both centering in and radiating out from the Jewish people"

14. "the dispensations both Jewish and Gentile, or of 'the earthly things' as distinguished from 'the heavenly things'"

15. "the unity . . . of the Church"

16. "the whole scheme of grace" and "the unchangeableness of God's grace"

17. the "calling thereupon of a church out of the Gentiles, that is, the taking away the Jewish garb from the church,

and the Jewish locality, and constituting it for all places and conditions, by making it spiritual"

18. the "restoration of the Jewish nation . . . and their re-establishment in their own land, to be the head of nations, and the centre of the earth's unity"

19. "Jerusalem as a centre, and the supremacy of the seed of Abraham as an example, and of David their king, as the head of all; this is only the fulfilling of that glory of Christ and blessedness of the whole earth"

20. "we have had the humility of the suffering Church, we wait for the glory of the triumphant Church"

21. "the great work behind the scenes in the spiritual world . . . which will prepare the way for the great work of peace and blessedness"

Modern dispensationalists have long credited Darby with the thoughts in the above 21 items, many of which distinguish Gentiles (and the church) from Jews. They add that this church/Israel "distinction" of his evolved into his pretrib rapture view.

Since these Darby thoughts often appear in his earliest prophetic writings (with varying wording), you may be wondering how early he expressed such thinking. While going through his short 1829 work (the first entry in Prophetic No. 1 of his *Collected Writings*), I found the following early expressions that are similar to what can be seen respectively in items 1, 7, 9, 14, 20, and 21 (above):

1. "the coming of the Lord" is "the prominent object" of the "faith and hope of believers"

2. "the restoration of the Jews to their own land"

3. "His sitting on the throne of David"

4. "the Jewish and Gentile dispensations"

5. "the church . . . was a suffering church" before "the church became triumphant"

6. "the secret operations of the Spirit of God"⁵

⁵J. N. Darby, "Reflections upon the Prophetic Inquiry and the Views advanced in it" (1829), Prophetic No. 1, pp. 25, 26, 14, 18, 29.

Yes, what you've just read are truly John Nelson Darby's thoughts — thoughts of his that reportedly paved the way for his arrival at a pretrib rapture.

But all of the words within quotation marks in the first 21 items, with the very same contextual connotations, are in Edward Irving's preliminary discourse in the first volume of the Lacunza translation which was published in 1827!

After pretrib dispensationalists read the preceding sentence, I can imagine one of them telephoning me. The conversation might go like this:

Dispensationalist: Dave, you've just told me what Irving said in 1827. Are you aware that R. A. Huebner's 1991 book, page 13, says that during Darby's solitude and convalescence, following his horse-riding accident, he came to understand such underlying thoughts — thoughts leading to a pretrib rapture — and that Darby's time of solitude was late 1826? Wouldn't this indicate that Darby came to such foundational and evolving thoughts before Irving did?

Me: Huebner seems to stand all alone with his late 1826 date. Heavyweight histories of Brethrenism, such as Harold Rowdon's *The Origins of the Brethren* and Max Weremchuk's *John Nelson Darby*, which offer evidence that Huebner has overlooked, document that Darby's months in solitude began a year later in late 1827.⁶

Dispensationalist: But what about Huebner's evidence on page 13 that J. G. Bellett's letter of January 31, 1827 said that Darby "has been laid up for nearly two months"?

Me: Weremchuk's evidence, including Darby's own words in his *Letters*, Vol. I, page 185, about his "deliverance from bondage in 1827-28," shows that Bellett's letter was erroneously dated.⁷ Huebner's section on Darby's accident/solitude avoids this Darby quote!

⁶Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1967), pp. 45-7; Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby* (Loizeaux Brothers, 1992), pp. 47-8.

⁷Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby*, pp. 50, 75.

Dispensationalist: Well, page 6 in the same Huebner book (1991) says that Darby was ordained as an Anglican Church deacon in February of 1825. Since Darby said in his *Letters*, Vol. III, page 297, that he served for “two years and three months,” this would take us up to May 1827 — which isn’t even close to late 1827. Since many agree that his accident/solitude happened late in one of those years — after 1825 and before the end of 1827 — it must have happened in late 1826.

Me: Huebner’s only source for the Darby ordination date is a George Stokes article in 1885 in *The Contemporary Review*. I have a copy right before me. On page 537 — Huebner says page 536 — Stokes wrote that in “1825 he was ordained deacon, and in February 1826 priest.” Stokes didn’t mention which month in 1825; February is Huebner’s assumption. Weremchuk, who discovered documentation in a Darby collection in archives in the Netherlands, and who also found an ordination article in the October 1825 *Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine*, proves that Darby was ordained as deacon on August 7, 1825.⁸ Two years and three months later would be late 1827. Something else — are you aware that Huebner’s claim about late 1826 is quite recent?

Dispensationalist: What do you mean?

Me: His 1973 book, the one that influenced Walvoord, Ryrie, and other leading pretrib promoters, states on pages 7-8 that “beginning about 1828” some underlying truths “began to be brought forth” including “the distinction (or rather dichotomy) between Israel . . . and the church,” adding that “flowing from” this “dichotomy” was “Christ’s pretribulation coming,” and that “J. N. Darby was the chief instrument” bringing out “these truths.” Can you guess why Huebner, in 1973, saw Darby developing these underlying “truths” in 1828 — and not in 1826, as he now claims?

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 233.

Dispensationalist: Tell me.

Me: The very first words in his 1973 book expressed his concern over allegations that Darby got his pretrib rapture from a female. And his last chapter, before his summary, discussed my evidence about Margaret Macdonald. Since her pretrib statement came in early 1830, and since he's always been committed to protecting Darby from all comers, he probably felt that a Darby developing as early as 1828 (with at least underlying "truths" if not actual pretribism) was as safe a stopgap, for the time being, as anything. But further research after 1973 caused Huebner even more concern.

Dispensationalist: What research?

Me: Although all of my books since 1973 have shown that the Irvingite development, as well as Margaret's, preceded Darby's, not until my 1983 book did I begin to analyze the Irvingites as much as I had analyzed the lassie. The same book of mine even quoted portions of Irving's preliminary discourse, portions other than the 21 items that inspired you to phone me. Since Huebner's 1973 book revealed on page 32 that he had read the Lacunza work, he could have known that Darby's key underlying "thoughts" had already been expressed by Irving. But since no one in 1973 seemed to know this, Huebner didn't have the pressure at that time to precede 1827 that he had later in 1991. In 1991, unlike 1973, he does refer to Irving's discourse but denies connections and avoids the above 21 items.

Dispensationalist: Yes, I know. And he says on page 145 that Irving's introductory discourse is dated "Jan. 17, 1827." Is it possible that Rowdon and Weremchuk could be wrong and Huebner right with his late 1826 claim? After all, late 1826 is certainly before January of 1827.

Me: "January 17th, 1827" was attached only to a short postscript that Irving added to his lengthy discourse. At the end of the main discourse, on page 188, Irving wrote "Christmas Day, 1826." Since he began this discourse after the Lacunza translation was finished at summer's end, and since

the 21 items appear early — on pages 4 through 13 — he could have recorded these items as early as September of 1826.

Dispensationalist: But Huebner says that Darby was developing his underlying thoughts as early as 1826. Since you don't seem to know exactly when in 1826 Irving added his 21 items to the early part of his discourse, do you still think that Darby couldn't have been the first one?

Me: There's something I haven't revealed yet.

Dispensationalist: What's that?

Me: On page 14, right after his 21 items, Irving wrote: "Such, in few words, is the form of doctrine concerning the second advent of our blessed Lord, which was made known to me in the much study of the Holy Scriptures; and which, after several months of secret meditation, I began last Christmas, with all discretion and with fear and trembling, to break up and deal out to the church which God hath committed to my charge. . . ."

His words "last Christmas" refer to Christmas of 1825. Not only had Irving been sharing these thoughts with his congregation this early, but he said that he'd been thinking these things for "several months" prior to Christmas of 1825!! No one has ever claimed that Darby had development like this as early as this!

Dispensationalist: Well, this is most interesting.

Me: Equally shocking is what Darby actually wrote in his earliest published writings, writings that have long been overlooked or misread. You'll have to read the next part of this chapter.

Dispensationalist: I'll read it right now. Thanks for the information and for your time.

By now, the caller I've imagined has undoubtedly gone over what you are about to read. Let's analyze, in chronological order, not only Darby's earliest prophetic works that

are included in the official reprinted editions but also some items Huebner has discovered:

1827

This year saw what Huebner (1973) referred to as “J. N. Darby’s first paper,” an unpublished paper that Darby sent to fellow clergymen.⁹

The only significant thoughts in it that Huebner then viewed as paving the way for pretrib were these: “An apprehension of our conversation in heaven” and “The church is a heavenly people.”¹⁰

But Darby’s “heavenly” theme was hardly new. We’ve just noted that Irving’s item no. 14 (above) was just as “heavenly.” And as early as 1812 Lacunza quoted all of Philippians 3:20 (“our conversation is in heaven”) in his own “heavenly” section.¹¹ This Darby paper’s “heavenly” section listed this reference along with his paraphrase: “their conversation (commonwealth) in heaven.”

Huebner avoided saying that in the same paper Darby was looking for only “the restitution of all things” and “the times of refreshing” — Acts 3:19, 21. (Scofield doesn’t see either fulfilled until the *start* of a future millennium.)

1828

This was when Darby’s first published paper appeared, according to Huebner, who, for pretrib foundational purposes, could find only these thoughts in it: “The desire for unity,” “The unity of the Church,” and “Practical unity.”¹²

⁹R. A. Huebner, *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered*, p. 37. (See J. N. Darby, “Considerations addressed to the Archbishop of Dublin and the Clergy” etc., *Collected Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 1-29.)

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, Vol. I, p. 153.

¹²R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 38.

Irving's item no. 15 spoke of "the unity . . . of the Church." And Lacunza (1812) had the "unity of the true Christian church."¹³

So, while examining Darby's own significant words at the time, we've seen that through 1828 he brought up only the "heavenly" church and the "unity" of the church, two themes that weren't original with him. And up to this point his church/Israel "dichotomy" was noticeably lacking.

Incredibly enough, the order in which Darby brought up these two themes (1827 followed by 1828) was Irving's order in his discourse (the middle of page 10 followed by the end of page 10) and Lacunza's in his first volume (page 153 followed by page 240)!

1829

We now come to what Huebner headlines as Darby's "First Paper on Prophecy."¹⁴

This is also the first work in Prophetic No. 1 of Darby's *Collected Writings*.¹⁵

Here we finally begin to find some detailed development in the Brethren leader. Let's analyze his key ideas, starting with the only one that Huebner (1973) viewed as significant:

1. "a confusion of the Jewish and Gentile dispensations — the hinge upon which the subject and the understanding of Scripture turns" (p. 18).

As noted, Irving's item no. 14 expressed the same dispensational distinction in 1827 (what he claimed to believe in 1825). Concerning the "hinge" phrase, *The Morning Watch* in March of 1829 spoke of "the hinge upon which the whole subject turns."¹⁶

¹³Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. I, p. 240.

¹⁴R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 70.

¹⁵J. N. Darby, "Reflections" etc. (1829), Prophetic No. 1, pp. 1-31.

¹⁶"W. D.," "On the First Resurrection" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), p. 62.

By 1991 Huebner had found two more underlying thoughts in this Darby paper. The first one:

2. “the hope of the church is His coming” (p. 10); and repeated (p. 25): “the coming” is “the prominent object of the faith and hope of believers.”

Irving’s item no. 1 said this in 1827 (another 1825 belief).

The second underlying thought found by Huebner:

3. “looking daily for the Lord’s coming” (p. 14).

Irving’s preliminary discourse (p. 67) said that each believer should “look daily for the coming of the Lord.” This section was what Irving believed in 1826. And everything was published in 1827.

As I went through Huebner’s 1991 book, I noticed that he took the word “daily” in the above Darby quote (which Huebner initially tied to “looking”) and gradually and subtly tied it to “coming.” But there’s a world of difference between a daily *looking* or *expectation* and believing that Christ can *come* daily, i.e., at any day — what Huebner has tried to read into this and similar Darby quotes.

This gradual shift on Huebner’s part, throughout more than 50 pages of his, has to do with his perception of what Darby believed during his solitude (1826-7, according to Huebner; 1827-8, according to others). I will now demonstrate this subtle Huebner change which was inspired by Darby’s much later reminiscences.

Huebner says that Darby learned “daily to expect” Christ’s return (p. 19); Darby’s “daily expectation” (p. 23); “the daily expectation” (p. 24).

But on page 65 Huebner declares that by “1827 JND understood . . . the ‘immediate coming,’ i.e., the daily expectation.” So, without offering any further evidence from Darby’s earliest words, we see that Huebner has subtly begun to disconnect “daily” from “expectation” and begun to connect “daily” with “coming”! By putting “immediate coming” within quote marks, Huebner can make his readers think

that this is an early Darby expression. But it isn't.

Page 70: "JND, in solitude in Dec. 1826/Jan. 1827, had learned the 'immediate coming'"; and (note well) p. 75: Darby "held that the Lord might come at any time."

Would Huebner think that because a pregnant woman daily expects and looks forward to a birth, the child can be born *any day*?

Having covered Huebner's "daily" technique, let's examine some other thoughts in Darby's 1829 article that he and some other modern writers have overlooked:

4. On several different pages Darby saw both the church and the Jews together on earth during a future millennium. On page 23 and 24 he talked about millennial "blessings which are the church's inheritance; that this will be upon earth (the Jews being restored, the temporal promises being ever theirs, not the Gentiles'; but that these shall enjoy the common blessing with them, as companions in this universal joy)." He added: "There will necessarily be no separation between those who are thus partakers of the blessings, and those who are God's on earth."

5. Although Huebner asserts that by 1829 (in fact, he says as early as late 1826) Darby looked for an imminent coming, Darby himself would deny this. On page 25 the Brethren teacher referred to "those who believe God's judgments are presently coming; for that belief urges them to special labour for the gathering in of God's elect to the knowledge of the refuge, before the scourge sweeps the earth, to preserve them that have believed." ("Refuge" and "scourge" are *intermediate* events that rule out imminence.)

6. The only coming Darby looked for in 1829 was the Revelation 19 coming — the only coming Lacunza and the Irvingites had been looking for — a coming that necessarily *followed* the "refuge" and "scourge," no matter how they were interpreted. On pages 28-9, after mentioning "the unclean spirits who are to gather the kings of the earth" (another *intermediate* event), Darby pictured Revelation 19's "white

horse, and He that sat upon him called Faithful and True," adding that before this final Advent there had been "a suffering church. Now He was Himself manifested in His power, and therefore the church became triumphant."

In this 1829 work, then, Darby still had a posttribulational outlook. Although he held to a distinction between the church and what pretribs view as "Israel," he saw no "dichotomy" (separation) during either a future millennium or future tribulation. In short, he then saw neither a pretrib rapture nor any underlying "truth" that could have led to one.

Having read this analysis of Darby's first work on prophecy, and having noted the side-by-side comparisons of Darby with others, you may be assuming, as Walvoord has assumed, that Darby couldn't have derived his eschatological views from others since his beliefs were reportedly based on only the Bible.¹⁷

Huebner also concludes that Darby's "thoughts on prophecy" were formed "independently of Irving or Lacunza."¹⁸

But all of this is another misconception. Darby himself, in this very work and showing that he wasn't developing independently, mentioned (pp. 6-10, 19-21) Irving, Lacunza, and *The Morning Watch* and even quoted various Irving works including his *preliminary discourse* — the document stating Darby's "evolving" thoughts long before Darby stated them!

This is how things stood prior to the crucial year of

1830

Darby's 1830 contribution, in which he was still defending historicism ("the 1260 days mean years"), is the second selection in Prophetic No. 1.¹⁹

¹⁷John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation*, p. 47.

¹⁸R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 40.

¹⁹J. N. Darby, "On 'Days' Signifying 'Years' in Prophetic Language" (1830), *Prophetic No. 1*, pp. 32-40.

It first appeared as an article in *The Christian Herald* (Dec. 1830), published in Dublin, Ireland. This Darby work again revealed his familiarity with both *The Morning Watch* and Irving's preliminary discourse. Part of his focus was on a review of S. R. Maitland's futurist works, a review which appeared earlier in this Irvingite journal and which included a lengthy quote from Irving's discourse.²⁰

Although he had some criticism for *The Morning Watch's* reviewer, Darby's historicism sided with the reviewer's historicism against Maitland's futurism. With this background in mind, let's notice the Darby thoughts that have interested Huebner. In 1973 he found only two quotes²¹, the first being:

1. "the church was a system of grace and heavenly hopes" (p. 35).

As noted, Irving (1827) and Lacunza (1812) also saw a "heavenly" church. The other Darby thought:

2. Concerning the Jews, Darby referred to "the Gentile parenthesis in their history" (p. 35). (Huebner quoted this again in 1991.)

Clarence Bass, when quoting this in 1960, put a footnote after "parenthesis" and said that, to his knowledge, no one before Darby had ever applied this phrase to the church.²²

Let me include a little more of the above Darby quote: "the Jewish church or nation (exclusive of the Gentile parenthesis in their history)"

Compare the more complete Darby quote with this one: "they relate solely to the Jewish nation, exclusively of the Gentiles" — words in *The Millennium*, by American pastor William C. Davis (1760-1831) of South Carolina in 1811!²³

²⁰Anon. writer, "Review of Maitland on the 1260 Years" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), pp. 509-18. (Another review of Maitland material appeared in June, 1830, pp. 448-62, same journal.)

²¹R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 40.

²²Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, p. 129.

²³William C. Davis, *The Millennium* etc. (Bullock's Creek, South Carolina, 1811), p. 6.

Although there's no proven connection, Darby could have read this book. Le Roy Froom wrote that American religious leader William Miller viewed the Davis book as one of the five most influential prophecy books of that period; Froom added that it was reprinted in England in 1818.²⁴

So we see that the essence of "Gentile parenthesis" was in circulation long before 1830. And even the word "parenthesis" had been in vogue.

Lacunza (1812) used "parenthesis" eight times on seven pages while describing a digression in the middle of one of Isaiah's prophecies.²⁵

And in early 1829 *The Morning Watch* editor, John Tudor, in an article on the prophet Zechariah, spoke of "the prophet looking on to the final purpose, and disregarding the intermediate period of desertion, as being a sort of parenthesis interposed by the faithlessness and sin of the people."²⁶

Now I want to bring out other significant thoughts in Darby's 1830 article (which I'll number) that Huebner has either ignored or played down. In 1991 Huebner begins his analysis of this 1830 work with the following Darby words found in it:

"First, in prophecy, when the Jewish church or nation (exclusive of the Gentile parenthesis in their history) is concerned, i.e., when the address is directly to the Jews, there we may look for a plain and direct testimony, because earthly things were the Jews' proper portion" (p. 35).

Huebner then writes that Darby held to "literal interpretation" but also "allowed for the use of symbol."²⁷ But Huebner stops short of Darby's real import which immediately follows:

²⁴Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. III, p. 392.

²⁵Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. II, pp. 157-63.

²⁶John Tudor, "On the Visions of Zechariah" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), p. 55.

²⁷R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 74.

3. "And, on the contrary, where the address is to the Gentiles . . . there we may look for symbol, because earthly things were not their portion. . . . When therefore facts are addressed to the Jewish church as a subsisting body . . . I look for a plain, common-sense, literal statement. . . . On the other hand, as the church was a system of grace and heavenly hopes . . . it is . . . symbolised by analogous agencies" (p. 35).

Was Darby meaning to say that what he viewed as plain, literal statements (like "we . . . shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air") apply only to Jews? Obviously not!

Since he lumped together the *non-earthly* Gentiles and church against the *earthly* Jews, was he thinking that Gentile ethnicity alone would qualify one for "heavenly" things? Didn't Darby eventually believe that, after a pretrib rapture, countless *Gentiles* as well as Jews would experience an "earthly" tribulation? So why did he seem to be needlessly anti-Jewish at this time?

Larry Crutchfield noted and quoted the same Darby paragraph, is of the opinion that it's neither systematic nor clear, wonders why Darby tied church prophecy to symbolism, and says that Scofield doesn't echo Darby's application of symbols to the church.²⁸

Since Crutchfield assumes that Darby was influenced by only the Bible and not by any human sources — especially the Irvingites — he can hardly imagine anyone stating the above Darby thoughts before Darby did.

But both Lacunza (1812) and Irving (1827 — stating what he believed in 1826) revealed that prior to 1830 Christians had seen the church in different symbols, even symbols that had originally (and literally) referred to only the Old Testament Israelites.

In a lengthy section explaining how fellow theologians had been interpreting *literally* and *allegorically* (and making

²⁸Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism*, pp. 149-51.

known his strong disagreement with them), Lacunza had this to say:

Nothing, or almost nothing, will they leave for the Jews, save what is found not so favourable to them, what is found against them, what is found severe, harsh, and bitter. If the prophecy denounce severities, if it denounce tribulations, if it denounce plagues, they understand it at once literally of the Jews; there is not, in this case, any reason why they should dispute with them what is their own: but if favours and mercies be announced, especially when great and extraordinary, then verily they may not be literally understood of the Jews, but allegorically of the Christians. And if, as very frequently happens, one and the same prophecy, speaking by name of the Jews, and to the Jews should announce both evil and good, in that case they divide the prophecy into two equal parts, giving the first to the Jews, and reserving the favourable portion for the Christians. . . .

Lacunza added that the same teachers, with “no foundation to rest upon,” had also been declaring the following:

When a prophecy speaks by name of Israel, of Judah, of Jerusalem, of Zion, &c. and it is known that the thing therein announced hath not been accomplished upon ancient Israel, nor upon Judah, nor upon Jerusalem, nor upon Zion, nor, in one word, upon the Jews or Israelites; then ought it to be believed that therein is inclosed some other mystery much greater than the words do signify; and the prophecy ought to be understood in a figurative and spiritual sense only, not of the ancient Israel, but of the new Israel; not of that Jerusalem or Zion *which killed the prophets*, but of that thereby figured, to wit, the present church; not, in fine, of the *synagogue of the Jews*, but of the *church of the Gentiles*.²⁹

But Irving’s preliminary discourse disagreed with Lacunza:

The epistles to the seven churches of Asia, to whom the whole book of the Apocalypse is addressed, do show that it was intended for the instruction and consolation of the Gentile and not of the future Jewish church as my author would have it. Upon the same grounds, on which I conclude that Isaiah was inspired to be a witness to the Jewish church and nation, and believe that all the terms there used of Jerusalem, Zion, Judah, Israel, &c. are to be literally understood of them, and by right belong to them in the first intention, and will certainly be fulfilled

²⁹Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. I, pp. 303-4.

of them, I do conclude that the Apocalypse belongeth to the Gentile church, and was given for her instruction and consolation, and will be all fulfilled in her. . . . From whence we conclude, as well as from the emblematical character of the whole book, that if Jewish names do occur in it, as in the sealing of the tribes, and in the new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven, they ought not to be understood literally, but emblematically, as Egypt, and Sodom, and Babylon are.³⁰

Note that Irving placed the “Gentile church” in between the past “Jewish church” and the future “Jewish church” (Gentile “filling” in between two slices of Jewish “rye”) — thus expressing, before Darby, the “Gentile parenthesis” concept. Also recall that many historicists of that period saw the Jewish “restoration” only in the vicinity of the second advent in about 1867, reason enough for teachers of the 1830’s to see only the church throughout most of the book of Revelation.

While Huebner in 1991 did quote the end of Darby’s 1830 article (“to be daily looking for the Lord, i.e., to be caught up to meet Him in the air in order to His judging of the nations”), he concluded that by 1830 Darby “held that the Lord might come at any time.”³¹

Darby’s tying the “caught up” with the “judging of the nations” is posttribulational. And the Brethren leader didn’t see this as an imminent coming because he expected the following *intermediate* events (omitted by Huebner):

4. “the last assault and taking of Jerusalem,” “the final apostasy,” “infidel apostasy,” “2,300 or 2,400 days,” “the possession of Jerusalem by its last enemy,” “the cleansing of the sanctuary,” and “the last infidel state” (pp. 32, 38-40).

A few examples will show that other historicists taught these next-on-the-calendar events before Darby did.

Irving’s preliminary discourse (1827) referred to “that great warfare in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, when Antichrist shall fall”³² and said that “this Antichrist is certainly

³⁰Edward Irving, *Preliminary Discourse*, p. xxxviii.

³¹R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 75.

³²Edward Irving, *Preliminary Discourse*, pp. vi, xliii.

appointed to fall upon the mountains of Israel."

In December 1829 an unnamed writer in *The Morning Watch* spoke of "an Infidel Antichrist" who "shall be the personal Antichrist" and who will "spring up in the Papacy." In an article dated "July 27, 1830" which was published in September in the same journal, editor John Tudor described "this last infidel, the personal Antichrist" as the "last climax of apostasy."³³

With reference to Daniel 8:14's 2300 days (or 2400, based on a manuscript variation) ending in the sanctuary cleansing, an anonymous writer in the same Irvingite journal (June 1830) declared: "The number two thousand three hundred . . . of very necessity joins on to, or includes" Luke 21:20's "desolation" and "must also of very necessity reach down to the cleansing of the sanctuary . . . which, by the confession of all, is still future. . . ."³⁴

Froom has a chart showing that many leading historicists between the 1760's and the 1840's, whose beginning dates for these days (which they viewed as years) had some variation, often saw them ending somewhere in the 1843-1847 period.³⁵

Darby revealed in about 1835 that he, too, had previously been one of historicism's date-setters: "There are excellent brethren in all countries who have sought to calculate these dates . . . some have fixed 1844, others 1847; I myself have made several calculations in the times past, and in the same sense."³⁶

Before I finish this analysis of what Darby wrote during the origin-setting year of 1830, attention must again be given

³³Anon. writer, "On the gradual Unfolding of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1829), p. 538; John Tudor, "On Antichrist, its Nature and Time" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), p. 484.

³⁴Anon. writer, "Review of Maitland on the 1260 Days" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1830), p. 459.

³⁵Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. IV, pp. 404-5.

³⁶J. N. Darby, *Etudes sur l'Épître aux Hébreux* (Lausanne, Switzerland: circa 1835), p. 146.

to R. A. Huebner, the militant member of the (Plymouth) Brethren who has swayed Walvoord, Ryrie, and other leading pretrib dispensationalists. In his 1973 and 1991 books, Huebner has concluded, from Darby's much later memory, that by 1830 Darby had developed not only underlying "truths" that could lead to the pretrib rapture but the pretrib rapture itself.³⁷

But Darby's words, at the time, deny all this. Through the end of 1830 he was expecting only the Revelation 19 coming. He saw no church/Israel "dichotomy," dispensationalism's most necessary underlying "truth," during either a future tribulation or a future millennium. Moreover, we've seen that Darby's so-called "truths" weren't original with him. And we've seen that the Irvingites clearly taught pretrib as early as September 1830 and that they didn't need any of these "truths" anyway; initially they had only a church/church "dichotomy" and rested their pretrib rapture on symbolism such as "Philadelphia."

Having explored Darby's earliest growth, let's weigh his later words in the balance and see if they're still found wanting:

1832

Huebner sees no significant prophetic development in Darby during 1831. But by 1991 he had found an 1832 Darby paper not mentioned in his 1973 work or included in Darby's *Prophetic No. 1*.³⁸

This paper was a review of writings by William Burgh, one of the leaders of the revival of futurism at that time.³⁹ In it Darby, who was still influenced by historicism, was concerned "that Mr. Burgh's views divert the attention of Chris-

³⁷R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, pp. 40, 74-5; *Precious Truths*, pp. 67, 75.

³⁸R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 79.

³⁹J. N. Darby, "Review of 'Lectures on the Second Advent', and 'The Apocalypse Unfulfilled,'" *Collected Writings*, Vol. 33, pp. 1-12.

tians from the present antichristian principles . . . to some supposed or future actings of a personal Antichrist. . . .”

Huebner includes this quote but doesn't explain why, if Darby in 1832 opposed the idea of a “future” Antichrist, his 1991 book claims earlier that as early as 1829 Darby “understood there would be a future, personal Antichrist.”⁴⁰ Would Huebner have us think that Darby accepted in 1829 what he opposed three years later?

Huebner emphasizes that Darby then also spoke of “the withdrawing of the saints” before “the worshipping of the beast.” If Darby was in fact describing a pretrib rapture, why wasn't he as clear as his 1830 piece which used “caught up”? By using only “withdrawing,” he may have been repeating his 1829 thought that before the “scourge” the saints would retire and be protected in some earthly “refuge.”

Even if we grant that Darby was then projecting pretrib, we can't grant him originality. During the previous year the Irvingite journal proclaimed that after the favored saints are “caught up,” those left on earth “shall be obliged to receive the mark of the beast,” adding that “every man that worshippeth not the image of the beast shall be slain.”⁴¹

1834

During what Huebner regards as the next year of significance, Darby produced several items:

1. In his two books Huebner includes an 1834 Darby article which described the “second coming” as “an immediate and protracted expectation and hope.”⁴² (This also wasn't significant enough for inclusion in *Prophetic No. 1*.)

In this writing Darby may have meant nothing more than

⁴⁰R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 73.

⁴¹“Fidus,” “Commentary on the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), pp. 261, 277.

⁴²J. N. Darby, “The Distinct Character of the Several Writings of the New Testament” (*The Christian Witness*, Jan., 1834), p. 143.

his 1830 quote ("daily looking for the Lord" when the church will be "caught up" just before the "judging of the nations"); then the immediate thing was the "daily looking" while the protracted (delayed) thing was the posttrib catching up following intermediate events. . . .

In March of 1829 John Tudor had the same thought: "The prophetic inquirer should always . . . distinguish carefully between that part of the prophecy which was immediately applicable, and that part of it which related to future times. . . ." ⁴³ (Can a future event be hoped for only *in the future* and not hoped for *today*?)

2. We at last arrive at an 1834 work of Darby deemed significant enough to be the very next prophetic study in Prophetic No. 1 following his 1830 article.⁴⁴ Since his works of 1829 and 1830 show his awareness of earlier Irvingite writings, we can be confident that well-read Darby was well aware of the rapid and detailed pretrib development that we've seen in *The Morning Watch*, 1830-1833.

In this short piece just over two pages long, his phrases closely resembled what we've noted in his 1830 article: "the last primary evil," "the last exhibition of power of the Roman beast, even Antichrist," "the last beast," "the great day of tribunal of judgment on the people and nations, beginning at Jerusalem," and so on. He spoke of "deliverance" for the "believer" (p. 43) but didn't explain *how* or *when*.

Three years earlier "Fidus" had referred to "the last wrath of the Papacy" ("Antichrist") and said that believers will be "exempted" from "the great tribulation . . . by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. . . ." ⁴⁵

3. Darby's next 1834 work was "The Dispensation of

⁴³John Tudor, "On the Visions of Zechariah" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), p. 50.

⁴⁴J. N. Darby, "On the Extended Scope of Prophecy" (1834), Prop. No. 1, pp. 43-5.

⁴⁵"Fidus," "Commentary on the seven Apocalyptic Epistles" (*The Morning Watch*, June, 1831), pp. 276, 284.

the Kingdom of Heaven.”⁴⁶ He distinguished between “the Jewish prophetic expectation” and “the *expectation* introduced by the gospel” (p. 54). Huebner claims that these Darby phrases pointed to the posttrib advent and the pretrib rapture, respectively. But this quote didn’t go beyond these expressions and elaborate.

The next page said that “the saints” will be “raised with Jesus at His second coming” — “second coming” and not anything descriptive of a prior rapture.

And Darby mentioned “the special privilege of the saints” in a future “kingdom,” comparing this with “the judicial blindness of the Jews” (p. 63). (In September 1830 “C” had the same favoritism: “. . . I by no means anticipate that the believers of the Mosaic dispensation are to share the highest order of the eonial dignity. . . .”⁴⁷)

4. Darby next had a study employing Old Testament “types.”⁴⁸ Huebner’s brief summary (1991) touched on only minor details and somehow missed the following:

Darby (pp. 64, 68) doesn’t see any sort of coming until “the restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21) when Christ’s “foes” are made “His footstool” (Acts 2:35) — all in a posttrib setting, says Scofield.

And see if you can find even a pretrib hint in these words:

He has appeared in the presence of God for us; and, I will add, the people of God (I mean the Jews), though under the cloud of His rejection, still waiting till the great High Priest shall come forth . . . and bless them in the name of the Lord. We know that He has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; we can see through the rent veil into the holiest of all, and see our Jesus there; and still, though longing and waiting for the time of His appearing, are content, because we know that Jesus is glorified, and His glory sure, waiting

⁴⁶J. N. Darby, “The Dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven” (1834), Prop. No. 1, pp. 53-63.

⁴⁷“C,” “On the future Purpose of God” etc. (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), p. 497.

⁴⁸J. N. Darby, “The Melchisedec Priesthood of Christ” (1834), Prop. No. 1, pp. 64-73.

only till His enemies be made His footstool . . . and that He will surely come — He will not tarry. . . . How do our hearts long for that day, the coming forth of Him our souls long for yet know, the universal blessing from the Most High God of heaven and earth (p. 71).

Note the usage of “forth.” We find Darby and the Jews waiting for the *same* day: the day Christ comes forth, the day when Christ “will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37). This is the “second advent” (Scofield) and not any sort of prior coming. On the next page Darby adds that this universal blessing will happen “after the victory over the gathered kings and great ones of the earth” — another indication that at this time he looked for only the (posttrib) advent.

5. Huebner (1991) also relied upon a letter written by Darby in 1834 which used the expression “Lord’s coming.”⁴⁹ Huebner claims that these words portray “the pretribulation rapture.” In light of the fact that Darby, concerning this coming, said that “the thoughts are new,” and added that during any teaching of it “it would not be well to have it so clear,” Huebner’s assessment is undoubtedly correct.

Darby, however, did not say in this letter that these “new” thoughts were his own; he was merely suggesting the further discussion (“direct testimony”) of them by others. In fact, we’ll observe that he was still undeveloped and indecisive for quite some time.

1835

1. The first of two Darby items (dated 1835) appearing in Prophetic No. 1 is sandwiched in between two 1834 works.⁵⁰

On page 45 the Brethren leader remarked about “the failing dispensation . . . in which we stand.” This had reference to the “ruin” or “fall” of the church, that the church was then generally seen as “apostate” and perhaps even in the period of “Laodicea.” Huebner (1991) says that Darby ap-

⁴⁹J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 26.

⁵⁰J. N. Darby, “Scope of Prophecy” (1835), Prop. No. 1, pp. 45-52.

prehended “the ruin of the church” as early as 1827.⁵¹

Again Darby wasn’t original. Irving, in a letter dated November 25, 1825, stated: “It almost tempts me to think more of the idea that these seven Churches are emblems of the seven ages of the Christian Church, to the last of which men are now arrived.”⁵²

Lacunza (1812) wrote that “the present . . . estate of the Christian church” is “very like to that seventh angel of the Apocalypse, neither cold nor hot. . . .”⁵³

Darby (same page and rating his own development): “I should value therefore exceedingly any light upon this subject.” And: “. . . I do not feel my mind so distinctly ascertained of that portion of the mind of God as to state myself at present anything concerning it, though quite alive to the inquiry.”

During the end-time “crisis,” wrote Darby, “Jerusalem and the Jews have a place in the secret enmity perhaps of the wicked one . . .” (p. 50). But four years earlier John Hooper didn’t indecisively use “perhaps” when he declared unhesitatingly that Matthew 24’s “tribulation” will be “poured upon the Jews.”⁵⁴

2. In the same year Darby responded to a tract that disagreed with his own millennial views.⁵⁵

In his reply (p. 78) he quoted the “restitution of all things” verse, adding: “. . . then Jesus is sent, the heavens receiving him *till then*” (emphasis his).

3. He also had an article in *The Christian Witness* on the book of Daniel.⁵⁶

⁵¹R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 18.

⁵²Quoted in Mrs. Oliphant’s *The Life of Edward Irving*, p. 185.

⁵³Manuel de Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah* etc., Vol. I, p. 264.

⁵⁴John Hooper, “The Church’s Expectation” (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1831), p. 324.

⁵⁵J. N. Darby, “A Letter Addressed to _____” etc. (1835), Prop. No. 1, pp. 74-88.

⁵⁶J. N. Darby, “Brief Analysis of the Book of Daniel” (1835), Prop. No. 4, pp. 55-62.

Evidently then more interested in analyzing than systematizing, he began: "I send you some analyses of books of prophecy. . . . I feel this to be a more satisfactory method than framing any system which the study of Scripture makes me feel I possess" (p. 55).

4. A lengthy, undated work by Darby appears in *Prophecy* No. 1 in between works dated 1835 and 1838.⁵⁷ Huebner's 1991 book, when analyzing Darby's writings through 1840, by-passed this important contribution.⁵⁸

The Brethren leader was still characterized by lack of clarity on these pages: "that they which have ears to hear may escape the judgment" (p. 95). What judgment? The tribulation? Escape by being raptured?

And don't overlook these Old Testament "types" (pp. 117-18): "Note, also, in the Jewish order, the feast of tabernacles came after the vintage. Leviticus 23 is the history of the world in its septarian [arranged in sevens] form. We have seen, historically, the antitypes, in the history of the church, of two of the feasts, though in their effects not fully accomplished: of the great eight-day feast we have yet to see the blessing and accomplishment. . . ."

But we've seen *The Morning Watch* developing these "types" six years earlier. In March 1829 John Tudor, having said that several feasts had been fulfilled in the church's history, added this concerning the eight-day feast: "The only remaining solemnity in the Jewish year is the Feast of Tabernacles . . . when 'he shall appear the second time' (Heb. ix. 28). . . ."⁵⁹

Having analyzed John Darby's eschatological development during the years immediately following 1830, we've observed that during this time he seemed to be anything but

⁵⁷J. N. Darby, "Evidence From Scripture" etc. (1835?), *Prop.* No. 1, pp. 89-121.

⁵⁸R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, pp. 79-88.

⁵⁹John Tudor, "On the Study of Prophecy" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1829), p. 8.

original. We now continue our analysis, noting the next development of the early Brethren leader that Huebner claims to have found.

1837

Huebner's 1991 book includes a Darby document not found in Prophetic No. 1.⁶⁰

Huebner notes that Darby referred to Matthew 24's "Jewish tribulation" (p. 274). (Recently we were reminded that *The Morning Watch* of 1831 singled out the Jews in the same way.)

Darby (p. 279) also saw the church "going in with Him to the marriage, to wit, with Jerusalem and the Jews." While you're wondering where his church/Israel "dichotomy" is, compare this quote with the definitely "dichotomous" Darby of 1840: "The church . . . will go immediately to meet the Lord, and the marriage of the Lamb will take place. . . . Where will the nations be? The government of the fourth monarchy will be still in existence, but under the influence and direction of Antichrist; and the Jews will unite themselves to him. . . ." (Darby didn't explain why the marriage "invitations" he had given to the Jews in 1837 were canceled three years later!)

1838

Huebner calls what Darby turned out in 1838 "an extremely important paper concerning the great principles of dispensational truth."⁶¹

On page 123 we find Darby describing the church as "heavenly" and Israel as "earthly." (In 1812 Lacunza had the

⁶⁰R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, pp. 84-5. (See J. N. Darby, "Matthew 24, 25," *The Christian Witness*, Apr., 1837.)

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 85. (See J. N. Darby, "Divine Mercy in the Church and Towards Israel," 1838, Prop. No. 1, pp. 122-64.)

same distinction, and Irving applied these adjectives as early as 1825.)

In this paper Darby also speaks of "the union of the church with Christ" (p. 124). In March 1831 *The Morning Watch* editor John Tudor had the same thought: "And thus by union with Christ, we become partakers of his inheritance. . . ." ⁶²

1839

You may be asking how soon we'll see John Nelson Darby teaching a pretribulation rapture, that is, a rapture before the 1260 days in the book of Revelation. These days, interpreted as years, had for centuries been historicism's only "tribulation." And the same days, taken literally, were futurism's only "tribulation" during its earliest 19th century restoration.

The answer to the above question lies buried within Darby's lengthy 1839 commentary on the book of Revelation. ⁶³

In both of his books, Huebner emphasizes that at the end of this work there's a chart showing the church in heaven starting with Revelation 4 (which it does show). ⁶⁴

Those who take the time to personally examine this Darby piece can conclude that Huebner's remark is grossly misleading, for these reasons:

1. There's no mention as to who sketched the chart or when (Darby later on? someone else later on?).

2. The chart doesn't match Darby's analysis of Revelation 3 and 4. In neither chapter does he see a rapture, or a rapture in between 3 and 4. He states that Philadelphia will

⁶²John Tudor, "On the Names of Christ" (*The Morning Watch*, Mar., 1831), p. 92.

⁶³J. N. Darby, "Notes on the Revelation" (1839), Prop. No. 1, pp. 165-260.

⁶⁴R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 46; *Precious Truths*, pp. 85-6.

“be kept from an hour” (p. 177) but doesn’t say how. On the next page he writes that after John was “translated (in spirit) into heaven . . . the churches now were no longer so recognised. . . .” He doesn’t say that church members were no longer *on earth*, but merely that there was no longer any recognition of them. If a spotlight shines on a performer on a stage and then shines on another performer, is this proof that the first performer is no longer on the stage?

3. In the same way that the above chart misleads and doesn’t reflect Darby’s words *at the time*, several pages later (p. 186) a footnote with no author or date (Darby later on? someone else later on?) states: “. . . the church” is “in the heavens from the end of chapter 3. It is quite done with on earth there.” Soon I’ll show that Darby’s much later *recollections* of his earliest development were equally misleading, that he later claimed that he’d held certain beliefs in his earliest days. But his earliest words contradict his later revisionism. If he’d written *at the time* what he later claimed, would there have been any need for later tampering?

4. Darby himself sees a pretrib rapture in Revelation 12, which contradicts the maturing “additives” in the chart and footnote. And this is where his real emphasis begins. After lumping together Revelation’s first 11 chapters with no individual chapter headings, he begins the next chapter with a centered subtitle (“Chapter 12”) and continues in this manner with chapters that follow.

Before we pry into his Revelation 12 development, a flashback to Irvingism is necessary. The previous chapter (section III-2) included Edward Irving’s focus on this chapter in 1831. There we found him advancing the idea that the “man child” (Rev. 12:5) is the *mystical* body of Christ, that is, the true church.

Irving had also said in 1831 that “we with him are called Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12)” and that “the mystery of God in the Christ is not completed in one person, Jesus of Nazareth, but in many persons, — Jesus and the elect.”

Marching in where angels had feared to tread, the early 19th century British seemed confident enough to be able to announce in time that the Bible no longer contained any "mysteries" because they had solved them all!

As early as his 1838 "Divine Mercy" work, well-read Darby had been getting close to this man child/mystical body concept. But something held him back. Without tying in the man child, he merely referred to "the church and Christ — one mystic Person."⁶⁵

But now, in 1839, Darby throws off his previous restraint and, at the same time, comes up with a rapture clearly preceding the tribulational 1260 days.

Darby's Pretrib Basis

Some present-day writers have assumed that early in his career, Darby had a fully developed gap of *seven* years between his rapture "stage" and his second advent "stage."

Harold Rowdon's 1967 book on Brethren history stated that by about 1833, Darby held to a rapture preceding Daniel's 70th "week" (Dan. 9:27) — a "week" pretribs view as seven years long.⁶⁶

Huebner in 1973 quoted the section written by Rowdon (who, like Huebner, is also a Brethren member). Although Huebner took issue with Rowdon on another matter several sentences earlier, at the same time he didn't disagree with Rowdon's claim that by about 1833 Darby had a pre-70th week rapture — even though Huebner had to have known, by the sources he cited, that in the early 1830's Darby didn't have a clearly delineated gap of even three and a half years!⁶⁷

In 1970 Ernest Sandeen wrote⁶⁸ that at the 1833 Powerscourt conference in Ireland, Darby introduced a pre-

⁶⁵J. N. Darby, "Divine Mercy" etc. (1838), Prop. No. 1, p. 124.

⁶⁶Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, p. 97.

⁶⁷R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, pp. 47-8.

⁶⁸Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, pp. 38, 67.

70th week rapture. On a later page he again asserted that at this time Darby taught a rapture preceding the events connected with the 70th week.

And Charles Ryrie asserted in 1981 that at the same conference Darby *clearly* taught a pre-70th week rapture.⁶⁹

But you'll remember that when we were present at that 1833 conference south of Dublin (was it raining?), Darby looked right at us and explained his beliefs. At that time he didn't sound at all like the "new improved" Darby that modern writers have pictured at that conference.

When we saw him several times the next year, he said something about "deliverance" but nothing about a rapture. Afterwards he said we'll be raised at the "second coming" and at "the restoration of all things." Then later he told us that we and the Jews were waiting for the *same* final day.

After we ran into him in 1835 and he said that we "may escape the judgment" (and I wondered *which* judgment), he dropped out of sight for a couple of years.

Remember what was on his mind when our paths crossed with his in 1837? Going to Christ's marriage with "Jerusalem and the Jews."

But now you should see his Revelation 12 development in 1839 (repeating Irving's in 1831):

Darby couldn't wait until his "Chapter 12" heading to start voicing his pretrib basis. Seventeen pages earlier we find him saying: "... the first act would be the taking of the saints out of the way; then the casting down of Satan ..." (p. 195). (Nothing explicit about a rapture here; he's only getting his readers ready.)

He repeats part of this: "the casting down of Satan" (p. 199); "Satan is cast down" (p. 202).

Then on page 205 he writes that Christ "is caught up to God and His throne" and at the end of this sentence finally mentions "the man-child."

⁶⁹Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About the Rapture* (Moody Press, 1981), p. 70.

On the next page Darby echoes Irving's 1831 definition of Revelation 12:5's "man child":

If we apply it to the saints, who overcome here (as we read) as He did, and to whom it is given to rule as He has received of His Father, then we find that, though the object of the enemy was to devour them too, they are caught up out of his way to Him who was above his power; and the trial and persecution fall on those who are left here — upon the woman. The details of this are entered into in what follows in the chapter. After the child is caught up, the woman flees. In this there are no details. It is a description of the position of the parties, and that with all possible clearness, as with divine power and precision.

On page 211 he added: "It is on earth, to the Jewish people, this Son is born: we belong to the heavens, whence Satan is cast out."

All of the above was stated by Darby *before* he got to his "Chapter 12" heading. After this heading he declares (p. 213): "The actual catching up of the saints is not here mentioned, because the church should always expect it. . . ." Three pages later he's a bit doubtful: "The saints *may* be united to the position of the man-child when removed hence and taken to Christ . . ." (emphasis mine).

Buried amid the above quotations was Darby's view of Matthew 24 (p. 200): "That chapter knows no first half week." He added that "Revelation 11 contemplates, I believe, only the last half week, that of Matthew 24." Since he couldn't have viewed another "last half week" after Revelation 11's "last half week," his rapture at this point wasn't a pre-70th week rapture but rather a rapture preceding only the *last half* of that week.

During the next three decades, Darby continued to base his pretrib rapture on the "man child" symbol. Any researcher can easily go through his prophetic volumes (1-4) and his *Letters* and find him declaring this repeatedly. Just a few examples:

In a work dated 1840, Darby confidently states: ". . . and this is what will happen when Satan, being cast out of heaven

(which event will occur when the church has been caught up into heaven), will come down to the earth in great wrath."⁷⁰

In 1842 he writes: "The Man complete is Christ and the church." "... the woman on earth ... can be none else but the Jews." "... Satan ... cannot touch the child who is in heaven."⁷¹

In 1852 he comments on the book of Revelation: "Chapter 4 shews the church in heaven." A change here? No. He's speaking in a *mystical* way and adds that "we are ... to be living in heaven while walking on the earth. ..."⁷² This same work states that "the first act of power, when the mystic man is complete, will be to cast Satan and his angels down. ..."⁷³

A later work, in the 1850-65 period, refers to "the timeless rapture of the man-child, for the church is one with Christ. ..."⁷⁴

In 1865 Darby writes: "I have no doubt that the 'man-child' ... includes the church as well as Christ."⁷⁵ Interestingly, this was rewritten later, stretched forward, and used as a footnote in the same 1839 Darby work (Prop. 1, p. 213) to give an appearance of greater maturation at the time!

But a change was in the works — Darby's works. In 1870 he sees the "church" not "in the world" but "seated upon thrones around the throne of God" (Rev. 4:4) and says that "Philadelphia ... shall be kept from the *day* of temptation. ..." (my emphasis but his change of "hour" to "day").⁷⁶

So by 1870 the Brethren leader finally had the rapture (and gap) that today's pretrib dispensationalists view as "theologically correct."

⁷⁰J. N. Darby, "The Hopes of the Church of God" etc. (1840), Prop. No. 1, pp. 328-9.

⁷¹J. N. Darby, "Notes on the Apocalypse" (1842), Prop. No. 2, p. 37.

⁷²J. N. Darby, "Seven Lectures" etc. (1852), Prop. No. 2, pp. 267-8.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁷⁴J. N. Darby, "The Rapture of the Saints" etc. (1850-65), Prop. No. 4, p. 163.

⁷⁵J. N. Darby, "Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ" (1865), Prop. No. 4, p. 246.

⁷⁶J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. II, pp. 105-6.

Considering Darby's lifelong determination to distinguish between the church and Israel, his ultimate tribulational transformation and raptural revision make sense. After all, Margaret Macdonald's basis was too "Jewish"; the two witnesses had been viewed originally as Old Testament characters. And Edward Irving's man child was eventually seen as having too "Jewish" a mother. That left only the *churchly* symbols of "Philadelphia" and "John" in the early part of the Revelation on which to base a pretrib rapture. Besides (what a coincidence!), wasn't Daniel's 70th week (of seven years) originally written for the "Jews"?

Yes, "Philadelphia" was definitely *churchly*. But only John heard "Come up hither." Could "Jewish" John also represent the church? Darby thought so. As early as 1839 he wrote that "John" is "made to represent the extended protracted existence of the church. . . ." ⁷⁷

Again, the Irvingites had said this much sooner. In 1829 John Tudor, while focusing on Revelation 14, said that the "Apostle" who wrote it "represents the church." ⁷⁸

Having seen Darby's earliest development, we'll now see what he did in later years to give it a much needed face-lift!

⁷⁷J. N. Darby, "Notes on the Revelation" (1839), Prop. No. 1, pp. 174-5.

⁷⁸John Tudor, "On the Structure of the Apocalypse" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), p. 294.

V

DARBY'S

REMINISCENCES

John Nelson Darby's reminiscences — what he later *claimed* he believed during his earliest development — were important to him.

The same recollections of his are equally important to some of today's Darby defenders; they can use them as "launching pads" and further exaggerate some of Darby's exaggerations and read far more into his earliest development than even he did.

At the same time there are many other writers whose intent, when citing these reminiscences, has not been to deliberately mislead; they've simply been unaware of Darby's earliest writings and thus haven't had opportunity to observe the discrepancies between them and his later claims.

During the past 25 years, many in this group have been directly or indirectly influenced by four authors who have defended and credited Darby and discredited others including Irving and those within his circle of friendship. By knowingly or unknowingly burying Irvingism's earliest development, these four haven't been under pressure to compare it with Darby's and thus have felt free to focus on Darby's 1840's-and-later progress, when he was obviously mature, and on Darby's later reminiscences.

One reason why I wrote the present book is the undue

emphasis that these four influential authors have placed on the same Darby reminiscences which, as we'll see, have been a short cut to nowhere.

The four and their books: Harold Rowdon's *The Origins of the Brethren* (1967); Ernest R. Sandeen's *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (1970); R. A. Huebner's *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (1973) and *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby* (1991); and Max S. Weremchuk's *John Nelson Darby* (1992), originally published in German (1988) and Dutch (1990). Their nationalities: Rowdon, British; Sandeen and Huebner, American; Weremchuk, Canadian by birth but German by residence. All, except Sandeen (who died in 1982), are or have been affiliated with the Brethren.

How important are Darby's reminiscences to these authors?

Rowdon (p. 46) leans on a later Darby recollection (of when he realized the believer's union with Christ) before he analyzes any of Darby's earliest works. And his book fails to follow Darby's progress up to the time when he clearly, and finally, began to teach pretrib in the late 1830's.

Unlike Rowdon, Sandeen doesn't analyze any of Darby's earliest writings. Instead, he bases his crediting of Darby only on reminiscences ranging from 1850 to 1865 (pp. 32-4, 62-4, 66).

Huebner's 1973 book quotes an 1855 recollection (pp. 33-7) before he starts analyzing Darby's earliest contributions. And before he goes over Darby material between 1834 and 1839, he first mentally prepares his readers with reminiscences dated 1868, 1850, and 1863 (pp. 44-6).

Before Huebner's 1991 book begins weighing Darby's first (1827) paper, he paves the way (pp. 6-7) with Darby reminiscing in 1855, 1877, 1876, and 1864 — this last date being the year Darby added a prefatory note to his 1827 paper. Huebner doesn't begin reviewing Darby's next (1828) work until 56 pages later, after he has conditioned his readers with

many quotes from Darby's memory as late as the 1850's and 1860's. As previously observed, both Huebner books avoid many damaging admissions Darby made between 1827 and 1839.

Although Weremchuk's book has a lot of fascinating aspects of Darby's lengthy career that many other writers have somehow missed, in order to credit Darby with the pretrib rapture concept he too relies heavily on what the famous Brethren leader later said he had believed in his earliest days (pp. 59-60, 120-1, 132-3). Like Rowdon and Sandeen, he fails to portray Darby's gradual, and less than mature, development throughout the exciting decade of the 1830's.

Since your curiosity has undoubtedly been aroused concerning the Darby reminiscences that have caused so much misunderstanding and controversy, the ones that Darby defenders have quoted most frequently will now be reproduced.

Keep in mind that most of them have reference to the 32nd chapter of Isaiah, and that Darby was focusing mainly on thoughts of his that supposedly occurred during his solitude. All agree that this time of convalescence was sometime between late 1826 and early 1828. And Darby defenders agree that his first (1827) and second (1828) papers had only two ideas that could have led to a pretrib rapture: his "heavenly" and "unity" ideas which, as we've shown, weren't original with him. Let's see if his later memories, presented in chronological order, claim that during his solitude he then held to *more* than these two ideas:

Memory No. 1 (1835-1838)

But I must, though without comment, direct attention to chapter 32 of the same prophet; which I do the rather, because it was in this the Lord was pleased, without man's teaching, first to open my eyes on this subject, that I might learn His will concerning it throughout — not by the first blessed truths stated in it, but the latter part, when there shall be a complete change in the dispensation, the wilderness

becoming the fruitful field of God's fruit and glory, and that which had been so, being counted a forest, at a time when the Lord's judgments should come down, even great hail, upon this forest; and the city, even of pride, be utterly abased. That the Spirit's pouring out upon the Jews, and their substitution for the Gentile church, become a forest, is here adverted to, is evident from the connection of the previous verses.¹

This undated Darby reminiscence, in between works dated 1835 and 1838, referred to his earliest prophetic development. He said that Isaiah 32 showed him a future time when the Jews would be substituted for the Gentiles after the latter had been judged. Obviously he had more detail than the "heavenly" and "unity" in his 1827 and 1828 papers.

Rowdon (p. 97) refers to the above without quoting it. It's hard to tell from Rowdon's summary if he thinks Darby saw a pretrib rapture here or merely the church/Israel "distinction."

Sandeen quotes nothing in it.

Huebner (1973, p. 56) includes everything but the last sentence and has no summary.

Huebner (1991, p. 17) includes everything and sees in it a "different dispensation coming" and a church/Israel distinction.

Weremchuk (pp. 120-1) includes everything but the last sentence, sees in it a future for Israel, and also a church/Israel distinction.

But much more exciting is Darby's

Memory No. 2 (1850)

It is this passage which, twenty years ago, made me understand the rapture of the saints before — perhaps a considerable time before — the day of the Lord (that is, before the judgment of the living).²

¹J. N. Darby, "Evidence from Scripture of the Passing away of the Present Dispensation" (1835-1838), Prop. No. 1, p. 108.

²J. N. Darby, "Short but serious Examination of . . . 'Daniel the Prophet'" (1850), Prop. No. 4, p. 67.

The above Bible passage is II Thessalonians 2:1-2 which mentions “the coming,” “our gathering” (Darby read “rapture”), and “the day of Christ” (Darby read “the day of the Lord”). “Twenty years ago” refers to 1830. Indecisively (“perhaps”) he saw an indeterminate gap between “rapture” and “day.” It wasn’t clearly pretrib, he didn’t claim originality for his 1830 *understanding*, and (though he knew that his followers could read too much into his 1850 hinting) he never claimed that he had originated the pretrib rapture view.

How could he have claimed this? He and many others knew that *The Morning Watch* had clearly and repeatedly taught pretrib in the September 1830 issue. They also knew that Darby was still defending the posttrib view in *The Christian Herald* in December 1830 and was still undeveloped throughout most of the 1830’s, as we’ve seen.

Why did Darby wait until 1850 to spring Memory No. 2? One possible answer is that this may have been a reaction to his rival, Benjamin Newton. The controversy between these two Brethren leaders exploded in 1845 after Newton had produced some works vigorously defending the historic posttrib view. Not only did Darby want only the pretrib view taught, he seemed to want to be viewed as the leading teacher of it.

That Darby relished being seen as the originator of an idea can be observed in a lengthy 1845 work of his which critically attacked one of Newton’s treatises.³ Note the start of the second paragraph in Darby’s preface: “The reader will be surprised to learn that since the year 1833 or 1834 I have been inclined to believe in the renewed existence of Babylon. Nay, I believe, though this is of very little importance, that I was the first person who thought so.”⁴

In his Revelation 12 section Darby took issue with Newton’s earlier statement, concerning the church, that “when the Pentecostal church was scattered, the man-child

³J. N. Darby, “An Examination of . . . ‘Thoughts on the Apocalypse,’ by B. W. Newton” etc. (1845), Prop. No. 3, pp. 1-320.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 1.

... was taken from the earth. . . ." Newton had added that the man child "is a symbol which would not, I think, be used of any Christians out of Jerusalem. . . ." Newton, a posttrib, couldn't accept Darby's position that the man child symbolizes a rapture before the last 1260 days.

Darby was incensed and replied that "there is clearly a standing and place proper to us . . . which knows nothing of Jerusalem nor of Jews — a heavenly standing which . . . has a heavenly Jerusalem for its mother . . . Are we to give up this . . . for that which . . . bears necessarily on the nation of Israel?"⁵

But by the 1870's, as noted, Darby's pretrib rapture rested no longer on the "man child" symbol but on the symbols in Revelation 3 and 4!

I've digressed long enough to show that Newton's competitive influence may have helped to trigger Darby's 1850 "rapture" memory.

In 1903 another Brethren leader, William Kelly, produced an article giving some background on Darby's 1850 "memory."⁶ He revealed that a "Mr. T. Tweedy" of "Demerara" had been the one who had suggested to Darby that the above Thessalonian passage teaches a prior rapture. (Thomas Tweedy was born in 1809. Demerara has reference to British Guiana, today known as Guyana.)

Now let me suggest that either Tweedy or Darby could have been influenced by *The Morning Watch* of September 1830. Not the "Fidus" article which saw "Philadelphia" raptured before "the great tribulation," which we've analyzed in our first chapter (pp. 8ff, also Appendix C). But what about an article by "T. W. C." in the same issue?⁷

This article wasn't clearly pretrib but had only an indeterminate gap between "stages" — what Darby said in 1850

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 161, 164.

⁶William Kelly, "The Rapture of the Saints: Who suggested it, or rather on What Scripture?" (*The Bible Treasury*, 1903), pp. 314-20.

⁷"T. W. C.," "On the Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the Gathering of his Elect" (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1830), pp. 587-93.

he had *understood* in 1830. In 1850 Darby wrote, concerning II Thessalonians 2:1-2: "It is this passage which, twenty years ago, made me understand the rapture of the saints before — perhaps a considerable time before — the day of the Lord (that is, before the judgment of the living.)" Interestingly, the 1830 article by "T. W. C." said that the "rapture" of "the then living saints" will occur a period of time "before" — "whether" this "period . . . be longer or shorter I cannot tell" — the "day of the Lord," that is, "*before* the judgment of the nations."⁸

Now, I don't have proof that "T. W. C." influenced Tweedy or Darby. But if Darby in 1850 had wanted to express the 1830 development of "indeterminate gap" rapturism, to what other 1830 source could he or anyone else have turned? Certainly not to his own writings; he was still defending posttrib in December 1830.

Neither Rowdon nor Sandeen quotes Memory No. 2.

Right now I'll again demonstrate, in slow motion, an instant replay of the "quick change" tactic we've already seen in R. A. Huebner, the Darby defender who has influenced Walvoord and Ryrie and through them some others.

Huebner's 1973 book (p. 44) quotes this 1850 Darby memory. Huebner's interpretation: that the 1850 Darby said that about 20 years earlier "he understood the rapture to precede the epiphany by a space of time."

Now note Huebner's change. Five pages later he has a chapter summary. Without offering further evidence, he now says that the same Darby memory shows that about 20 years earlier Darby "understood" the "truth of the pretribulation rapture"! But there's a huge difference between a rapture/indeterminate gap/epiphany and a "pretribulation rapture" — the difference being what Huebner is willing to read into this memory, a memory that claimed far more than Darby's own words in 1830!

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 589-92.

Of course no one can scientifically disprove someone's claims about his own thoughts years earlier. All we can do, when establishing development, is note someone's words *at the time*. And this we've done with Huebner's in 1973.

Huebner's 1991 book (p. 75) again quotes Memory No. 2 and again ties pretrib to it. But Huebner claims even more: that as early as 1827 Darby held to pretrib. Since this is a drastic change from his 1973 claim that Darby embraced pretrib no earlier than 1830, and since his new claim is reminiscent of the late 19th century plotter's desperation and tactics, I'm saving all this for a later chapter.

Weremchuk quotes everything. His conclusion is that Darby recalled that during the *early 1830's* he had understood a rapture sometime before the day of the Lord (pp. 131-3).

Of these four authors, Huebner is the only one who goes beyond what Darby actually wrote in 1850, the only one who derives pretrib from this second recollection.

We now take a look at

Memory No. 3 (1855)

It then became clear to me that the church of God . . . was composed only of those who were so united to Christ. . . . At the same time, I saw that the Christian, having his place in Christ in heaven, has nothing to wait for save the coming of the Saviour, in order to be set, in fact, in the glory which is already his portion "in Christ". . . . In my retreat, the 32nd chapter of Isaiah taught me clearly, on God's behalf, that there was still an economy to come, of His ordering; a state of things in no way established as yet. The consciousness of my union with Christ had given me the present heavenly portion of the glory, whereas this chapter clearly sets forth the corresponding earthly part. I was not able to put these things in their respective places or arrange them in order, as I can now. . . . What was to be done? I saw in that word the coming of Christ to take the church to Himself in glory.⁹

This is the only Darby reminiscence under analysis that

⁹J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. III, pp. 298-9.

is quoted in all five books by our authors. The Brethren leader again focused on Isaiah 32. And note again that here he “remembered” more details than can be found in his 1827 (“heavenly”) and 1828 (“unity”) papers.

Rowdon (p. 50) quotes only three short phrases of Darby’s remembrance that around 1827 he viewed a future millennium.

“Helter-skelter” can describe Sandeen’s treatment of this 1855 memory. First he says it was composed 20 years after Darby’s solitude; it was 28 years later. But he’s correct that Darby’s solitude found him expecting only the second advent and not a pretrib rapture. After his second citation of it, he claims that Darby was then reminiscing about his Powerscourt period; but he was recalling his 1827 beliefs; Powerscourt was years later. In his third reference, Sandeen asserts that in this 1855 recollection Darby was seemingly convinced that in 1827 he was already holding to a secret, pretrib rapture (pp. 32, 62, 64). (Thus the Darby of 1827 who is posttrib becomes the Darby of 1827 who is pretrib, with Sandeen’s help.)

Let’s look at the two phrases that could have caused Sandeen to read pretrib into this memory.

The first: “nothing to wait for save the coming.”

Imminence? Pretrib? We’ve seen that in his papers up to and through 1830, Darby was waiting for “the restitution of all things,” “the times of refreshing,” the coming of the horse rider called “Faithful and True,” and the coming for the “judging of the nations.” And he saw *intervening events* before this coming.

The second phrase: “the coming of Christ to take the church to Himself.”

For centuries Christians had looked for only one coming which contained the *for* aspect as well as the *with* aspect. Indeed, even the classic “rapture” passage (I Thess. 4:13-18), which pretribs say is the coming *for* saints, uses only “with” (and not “for”) in this regard.

After the *for* aspect was stretched forward and turned into a separate coming (which eventually became the pretrib rapture), phrases like “receive you unto myself” (John 14:3) — which for centuries had been applied to only the final advent — were applied by pretribs to their rapture.

Expressions such as “coming for,” “coming with,” “receiving us to Himself,” etc. are notably lacking in both early Irvingism and early Darbyism. I couldn’t find Darby’s prophetic volumes referring to a coming “for” until 1840 (following his quotation of John 14:3); the earliest usage of this in his *Letters* seems to be in 1843.¹⁰

By 1855 Darby and his followers were thoroughly steeped in pretrib. He had to have known that if he used these two phrases in this recollection, readers could easily infer, as Sandeen has inferred, that he’d come to pretrib as early as 1827. On the other hand, Darby knew that if he were challenged about his earliest development, his two phrases were sufficiently vague; he hadn’t explicitly said that he’d embraced pretrib in 1827! (We’ve seen that in 1827 he looked for only the final advent. His 1855 phrases can be viewed as *advent* phrases just as easily.)

Huebner’s books include this Darby memory. His first (p. 33) sees mainly Darby’s nature-of-the-church development. His 1991 book (p. 24) emphasizes the Brethren leader’s “daily expectation” — which we’ve already seen changed by Huebner into an “immediate coming” and finally into an any-moment, pretrib coming.

Weremchuk (p. 121) sees only the church/Israel distinction and its culmination during a future millennium.

Memory No. 4 (1863)

... the great principles on which my mind was exercised ... Christ

¹⁰J. N. Darby, “The Hopes of the Church of God” etc. (1840), Prop. No. 1, p. 294; *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 58.

coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation, from Isaiah xxxii. (more particularly the end); all this was when laid aside at E. P.'s in 1827. . . .¹¹

Rowdon doesn't quote this memory.

Sandeen has no quotation but refers to it (p. 64). This is the second memory in which he finds Darby claiming that he believed in pretrib in 1827. But the "coming" here is "collaterally with" — that is, at the same time as — the start of a future millennium. Again we find Darby embellishing what his earliest papers stated, and Sandeen embellishing what Darby has embellished.

Huebner (1973) quotes this memory but sees only a future dispensation (p. 48). Huebner (1991) quotes it (p. 25) without specific comment.

After Weremchuk includes it, he derives only a generic coming and a future dispensation (p. 60).

Memory No. 5 (1868)

Looking now at Memory No. 5, we see Darby's concept of "sitting in heavenly places" mentioned as well as the idea of a dispensational change in Isaiah 32:

The coming of the Lord was the other truth which was brought to my mind from the word, as that which, if sitting in heavenly places *in* Christ, was alone to be waited for, that I might sit in heavenly places *with* him. Isaiah xxxii. brought me to the earthly consequences of the same truth, though other passages might seem perhaps more striking to me now; but I saw an evident change of dispensation in that chapter, when the Spirit would be poured out on the Jewish nation, and a king reign in righteousness.¹²

Rowdon and Sandeen don't quote this. Huebner (1973, p. 39; 1991, p. 19) sees only a future millennium and a "daily" expectation, respectively. Weremchuk (p. 121) sees only a future dispensation.

¹¹J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 344.

¹²J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 516.

Memory No. 6 (1879)

Isaiah xxxii. it was that taught me about the new dispensation. I saw there would be a David reign, and did not know whether the church might not be removed before forty years' time. At that time I was ill with my knee. It gave me peace to see what the church was. I saw that I, poor, wretched, and sinful J. N. D., knowing too much yet not enough about myself, was left behind, and let go, but I was united to Christ in heaven. Then what was I waiting for? J. G. B. came up and said they were teaching some new thing in England. "I have it!" I said.¹³

Rowdon, Sandeen, and Huebner (in 1973) were evidently unaware of this last Darby reminiscence.

By 1991 Huebner knows about it and includes it on p. 23. He emphasizes 15 words in it, claiming that these words prove that Darby, in 1879, was really saying that, yes, he had indeed believed in a pretribulation rapture way back in 1827. Later on I'll have a complete discussion of this memory and Huebner's determined attachment to it. In the meantime, can anyone find the 15 words in this memory that prove that Darby understood pretrib in 1827 or in any other year?

Weremchuk (p. 120) also quotes this 1879 recollection but can't find even a hint of pretrib, adding (p. 131) that Darby's understanding of such a view came only in the early 1830's.

This completes our in-depth look at Darby's best-known reminiscences. We've seen that he "remembered" far more detail than can be found in his earliest writings, and that some of his later defenders have further revised some of his revisions. We've also noted that his phraseology in Memory No. 2 (the only one explicitly mentioning his *rapture* progression) was strikingly similar to wording in *The Morning Watch*.

Another Darby recollection, overlooked by many, is equally impressive when compared with the same Irvingite journal. For want of a better title, I'll call it

¹³J. N. Darby, "Thoughts on Revelation XIV., XV., XVI." (*The Bible Treasury*, Sep., 1879), p. 352.

Memory No. 7 (1853)

This memory pointed back to Darby's in-person observation of one of the mid-1830 prayer meetings in Scotland conducted by the Macdonalds; it was also his reply to F. W. Newman's recollection after he had attended one of them.¹⁴

But the earliest description I've found of these meetings is in John B. Cardale's letter in *The Morning Watch* in December 1830.¹⁵

A fascinating exercise will be the quotation of Cardale's expressions, followed by Darby's in parentheses (with enough added words for clarity), and finally noting that *only one* of Cardale's major details — one that he repeated for emphasis — was omitted by Darby in his account:

1. Cardale: the chief speakers were "J. M'D," his brother "G. M'D," their sister "M. M'D," "the woman-servant of the M'D.'s," and "Mrs. _____, one of the ladies who had received the Spirit, but had not received the gift of tongues." (Darby: "the chief persons who spoke" were "J. M'D _____," his "brother," "their sister," their "Gaelic maid-servant," and "Mrs. J. _____" who spoke only "in English.")

2. Cardale: "The mode of proceeding is for each person who takes a part first to read a Psalm in metre, which is sung by the meeting . . . and he then prays" before "speaking in an unknown tongue." (Darby: "they read, sung psalms, and prayed" before "exercising the gifts.")

3. Cardale: "I have heard . . . J. M'D speak for twenty minutes" in tongues "with all the energy of voice and action of an orator" and with "Latin radicals." (Darby: "J. M'D _____ spoke . . . for about a quarter of an hour" in tongues "with great energy and fluency, in a semi-Latin sounding speech.")

¹⁴J. N. Darby, *The Irrationalism of Infidelity* (London: 1853), pp. 283-5; F. W. Newman, *Phases of Faith* etc. (London: 1850).

¹⁵John B. Cardale, "On the extraordinary Manifestations in Port-Glasgow" (*The Morning Watch*, Dec., 1830), pp. 869-73.

4. Cardale: "J. M'D. . . . began speaking in an unknown tongue" and then "he sung . . . in the same tongue." (Darby: "J. M'D _____ spoke" in an unknown tongue and "then sung a hymn in the same.")

5. Cardale: "the woman-servant of the M'D.'s arose and spoke (for a space of, probably, ten minutes) in an unknown tongue." (Darby: "the Gaelic servant spoke briefly in 'a tongue.'")

6. Cardale: "Mrs. _____" — the English-speaking person — "began speaking in a loud voice." (Darby: "the gifted English-speaking person, with utterances from the highest pitch of voice.")

7. Cardale: "two other gentlemen" were present. (Darby: also present were "a very estimable person" and "a minister.")

8. Cardale: the speakers were "honest, pious, and sober individuals." (Darby: "The M'D _____s were in ordinary life, quiet, sober men" and "most blameless.")

But now behold: what Darby came close to and yet omitted is what Cardale repeated and thus emphasized.

Cardale wrote that "M. M'D. commenced also speaking" and "gave testimony to the judgments coming on the earth; but also directed the church to the coming of the Lord as her hope of deliverance." Two pages later he said that "M. M'D." was again heard "speaking in a loud voice" while "denouncing the coming judgments."¹⁶

In the previous chapter (III-2) we observed Irving's June 1831 reflection of Margaret's partial rapturism. Like her, he pictured a "two-fold company." The favored group would have a pretrib rapture while the less favored group would be the *overcomers* during the judgments-packed tribulation.

This 1853 account by Darby included only Margaret's comments about the *overcomers*; he wrote that when he heard Margaret, she gave only "a string of texts on overcoming";

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 870-1, 873.

since he omitted what she taught about a pretrib coming, his readers could have concluded that she was just another posttrib!

Is it more than coincidental that the Darby who became the 19th century's greatest pretrib promoter was the *only one* remembering Margaret who couldn't remember her pretrib "deliverance"? He could remember things in his own past that didn't exist, and could fail to remember something about Margaret that did exist!

Of much more concern to Darby, however, was the collective pretrib teaching by Irving and his friends — public, detailed development that could hardly be compared with Margaret's private, brief account in her own handwriting.

It's been impossible for me to determine exactly when Darby decided that credit for certain ideas should be taken away from those within the Irving orbit. Although in his 1829 work he had some criticism of Irving, Darby at the same time referred to "a deeply interesting and, I think, profitable and timely sermon of Mr. Irving's."¹⁷

And there are still unanswered questions. Did Darby bring up Irving's "Incarnation heresy" only after he coveted credit for pretrib? Did antagonist Newton prompt Darby's 1850 "rapture" recollection? Were Darby's last reminiscences his reactions to works by fellow Brethren member S. P. Tregelles that had credited Irvingism with pretrib?

Someday some advanced student may issue a doctoral dissertation with a title something like this: "Newly Discovered Circumstances Inciting Embellishment in the Reminiscences of John Nelson Darby Which Eventually Led to Later Embellishment of Darby's Initial Embellishment."

Up to this point we're forced to conclude that dispensationalism's century-old version of its own development should no longer be accepted for these reasons:

¹⁷J. N. Darby, "Reflections upon the Prophetic Inquiry" etc. (1829), Prop. No. 1, p. 19.

1. The Irvingites publicly taught a pretribulation rapture long before Darby did.

2. The underlying "truths" (such as the church/Israel "dichotomy") that supposedly led Darby to pretrib were taught earlier by others, none of whom was led to pretrib by these "truths." The same "truths" were used for support only *after* pretrib was established. The Irvingites were led to pretrib by Old Testament and New Testament *symbols* including the Jewish feasts, the two witnesses, and the man child — symbols adopted by Darby later on.

3. If Darby had been the first to clearly teach pretrib or "truths" leading to it, he would have had no need to overstate his earliest development when reminiscing in later years.

Later 19th century scholars, *aware that Irvingism never needed later reminiscences to "clarify" its own early development*, uniformly credited the Irvingites with dispensationalism's chief features including the pretrib rapture.

4. Twentieth century Darby defenders, evidently dissatisfied with Darby's attempts to embellish and exaggerate his own earliest words, have overstated even what he overstated.

For a final glimpse into Darby's moral character, several quotes from two outstanding, non-hostile histories of the Brethren, written by those who have been associated with Brethren, are now presented.

In 1968 F. Roy Coad, a Britisher, wrote that Darby "used disingenuous tactics" and "descended to the disreputable," adding that "Darby's was a mind impossible to bring to objective debate."¹⁸

In 1991 Max S. Weremchuk, a resident of Germany, included what Benjamin Newton stated about Darby (as found in the now famous *Fry Manuscript* in Britain):

J. N. Darby was a very subtle man. He had been a lawyer, or at least

¹⁸F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 136, 143, 145.

educated for the law. Once he wanted his Archbishop to pursue a certain course, when he (J. N. D.) was a curate in his diocese. He wrote a letter, therefore, saying he had been educated for the law, knew what the legal course would properly be; and then having written that clearly, he mystified the remainder of the letter both in word and in handwriting, and ended up by saying: You see, my Lord, such being the legal aspect of the case it would unquestionably be the best course for you to pursue, etc. And the Archbishop couldn't make out the legal part, but rested on Darby's word and did as he advised. Darby afterwards laughed over it, and indeed he showed a copy of the letter to Tregelles. This is not mentioned in the Archbishop's biography, but in it is the fact that he spoke of Darby as "the most subtle man in my diocese."¹⁹

In the final analysis, how should we view John Nelson Darby? We can't truthfully call him the *originator* of the pretribulation rapture view. He himself never claimed this, although he used phrases in his recollections that could have led others to think this of him.

And he didn't originate the "church/Israel distinction" (the church had always seen a distinction between itself and ethnic Jews or Israelites) or the "church/Israel dichotomy" (the separation of these two during a future *tribulation* — the only time pretribs really need such a separation in order to retain their escapism).

And he wasn't original with his "heavenly vs. earthly" and "unity" themes or with his "literal method" and "ultimate glory of God" concepts.

Do we dare call him a *systematizer*? A "system" was something he looked on with evident disfavor.

In some undated writing (possibly produced in the 1840's), Darby said: "A system takes the place of godly subjection to the word."²⁰

In 1866 he wrote: "I should deplore as ruinous, slipping into the place of followers of a system of doctrine."²¹

¹⁹Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby*, p. 142.

²⁰J. N. Darby, "A Few Brief Remarks" etc. (1840's?), Prop. No. 4, p. 38.

²¹J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 455.

In 1880 he remarked: "Truths are sometimes simpler, when we take them simpler and do not make a system."²²

Well, I think we can at least acknowledge him as a great *popularizer*. And since we now know that some of the earliest pretrib teachers had some weaknesses (don't we all?), I think we can also view Darby as a *revisionist* (of some of his early thoughts).

I should add that while going over thousands of pages of the earliest writings of the Irvingites and Brethren, I have found much that's been profitable and inspirational; at times their words have even made my eyes rather misty.

But Darby wasn't *the* plotter who pulled off the most astounding historical revisionism of the past century. The never-before-revealed story about him is the very next event on this present book's "calendar"!

²²J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 79.

VI

PRE-PLOT PRACTICING

Let's imagine that you're a British writer living 100 years ago and that you strongly desire to credit John Nelson Darby with the any-moment, pretribulation rapture view.

Your own writings show your familiarity with not only the Irvingites but with even the Macdonald lassie who inspired them. You even quote Edward Irving's preliminary discourse as found in the Lacunza work, knowing full well that Darby's early thoughts were really Irving's much earlier thoughts.

So how can you get away with claiming for Darby what Darby didn't claim for himself? Especially since for decades now the leading writers, Brethren as well as non-Brethren, have been uniformly crediting someone in Irving's "family" with this radically different end-time construction.

The fact that generations of 20th century dispensationalists have repeated the plotter's historical revisionism in countless books, pamphlets, and papers is at least an inadvertent tribute to his talents if not to his trustworthiness.

That he has gotten away with this for a century is unknown history. How he accomplished this is hereby revealed for the first time.

We now continue where we left off in the first chapter in order to demonstrate what could have further inspired — rather, ignited — the plotter's historical rewrite. The later

19th century writers that were quoted in that chapter didn't merely credit someone in the Irving orbit with pretrib. Many of them also included unflattering aspects of the group the plotter was part of: the (Darbyist) Brethren.

The following "dirty linen" excerpts, covering the decades leading up to the plot, exhibit no anti-Brethren malice on my part. They are given only to show what could have finally triggered the plotter (who is mentioned by name in what is quoted). Over the years some of my best friends, such as the late F. F. Bruce with whom I had frequent correspondence for many years and in-person discussion during my research in Britain, have been Brethren members — many of whom have rejected dispensationalism.

Since we already know what Robert Baxter and Robert Norton said about the pretrib origin (in the 1830's and 1840's), and since we've also noted the Newton-Darby "rapture" controversy, let's see what could have caused the plotter's temperature to rise during later decades, beginning with

The 1850's

In 1855 Brethren scholar S. P. Tregelles credited "Judaizers" (the Irvingites) with the "secret rapture."¹ And the plotter knew if it leaked out that the Irvingites originated pretrib, that would mean a loss of its growing credibility.

The 1860's

Robert Norton's 1861 book revealed that Margaret was the first person to teach a pretrib rapture.²

In 1864 a Tregelles book credited one of the Irvingites with the "secret rapture."³

¹S. P. Tregelles, "Premillennial Advent" (*The Christian Annotator*, June 16, 1855), p. 190.

²Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles* etc., pp. 1, 15, 185.

³S. P. Tregelles, *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*, p. 35, footnote.

The 1870's

In 1872 Thomas Croskery of Ireland had a lengthy article on the Brethren in *The Princeton Review*.⁴ Here are some excerpts including what Croskery termed the "leading views" of this group (second paragraph):

The zealous and aggressive sect known as the Plymouth Brethren, though deriving its formal origin from the present century, is in reality only a stronger development of a peculiar separatist tendency which has often before appeared in the history of the Church. It represents among existing denominations a system of pure ecclesiastical communism, with a theology in the main evangelical but spoiled by Antinomian and Socinian elements, and a theory as to the dispensation of truth mainly borrowed from the Millenarians. The aim of the Brethren is to "gather churches out of churches;" to disintegrate all existing bodies by opening a door in each, not for the exit of the faithless and false-hearted, but the pious and the good; and, accordingly, they prowl unceasingly round all our churches, seeking to reap where they have not sown, and leaving to the denominations generally the exclusive privilege of evangelizing the masses (p. 48).

That the moral law is of no use at all to believers, that it is no rule for believers to walk by, that all saints have the right of ministry, that the doctrine of repentance is a soul-destroying doctrine, that believers are justified from eternity, that God's children are not to pray for the pardon of their sins, that sanctification is imputed and supersedes all personal and progressive holiness, that believers have nothing to do in the way of keeping themselves from sin for God must look to them if He will. . . . (pp. 49-50).

Mr. Darby is undoubtedly if not the ablest, at least the most daring of all the Plymouth leaders, and, judging by his writings, he deserves the reputation he has acquired by pursuing his theological opponents with a virulence that has no parallel in the history of religious controversy. He has been opposed for nearly thirty years to all the best names in Plymouthism — Muller and Craik of Bristol, Soltau of Exeter, Groves of Bagdad, and Newton and Congleton of London; but

⁴Rey. Thomas Croskery, "The Plymouth Brethren" (*The Princeton Review*, Jan., 1872), pp. 48-77.

he has succeeded nevertheless in making Darbyism by far the strongest development of Plymouth opinion (p. 53).

There never was anything so frightful as the spirit of their controversies: they exceed all the worst men of the Churches in their calm way of saying the most malignant things. One of the mildest of Mr. Darby's disciples, in condemning the Newtonites, says that "Satan commenced the evil at Plymouth by bringing in sectarianism, clericalism, and lying." These are strong words for saints. Satan is always "on the other side." They prove at all events that, notwithstanding their superior light, they are not exempt from the moral and religious failings of other denominations (p. 75).

Five years later a medical doctor, James Carson, produced a book dealing with the Brethren.⁵ Here's a sample:

In place of trying to make everything plain and specific to the eye of the Christian public, the Darbyites have managed to cloak their opinions by using language in a Jesuitical sense, and the consequence is, that none of the parties who have hitherto tilted with them, seem to have been able to discover all the peculiarities of the sect, or yet thoroughly to expose and overturn their obnoxious sentiments. They have been frequently met in such a powerless way, by men who were not naturally fitted for the task or who were not thoroughly up to their system, that the opposition they have encountered has only added strength to their cause. Unless a person makes himself properly acquainted with the opinions he controverts, keeps closely and strictly to Bible principles, argues carefully, accurately, and with the utmost precision on every point, and hits home without fear or dread, it is impossible to manage such wily and slippery customers (pp. iv-v).

An 1879 book by Thomas Croskery⁶ revealed these details:

We must now notice the tendency of Brethrenite doctrine. It clearly tends to immorality. Mr. Kelly says: "I am no longer, as a Christian man, having to do with the responsibility that attaches to mortal men, but am passed now into a new state, even while I am in the world." This doctrine is capable of serious misapplication. Let us hear the

⁵James C. L. Carson, MD., *The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren* (London: Houlston & Sons, 1877).

⁶Rev. Thomas Croskery, *Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines* (London: William Mullan & Son, 1879).

testimony of Brethren themselves. Mr. William H. Dorman, a Darbyite for twenty-eight years, says, in reply to a statement of Mr. Macintosh, that "you cannot get on in the assembly, if you live in secret sin": "There is not an intelligent person, young or old, in the assembly, where he is minister, who is not painfully conscious that instances among *themselves* contradict the statement, and that circumstances, and not the purity of the atmosphere, brought the sin to light." Mr. Dorman says, "In an incredible number of instances besides, the evil has existed for *years*" (*High-Church Claims*, Letter v., p. 7). The Rev. Frederick Whitfield, incumbent of Kirby Ravensworth, Yorkshire, who worshipped twelve years with the Brethren, says: "I have omitted altogether touching on one point — the flagrant *immoralities* among the Plymouth Brethren. My personal knowledge, and information from those amongst them, supply me with some of the most shocking cases, so shocking that I cannot bring myself to give them publicity" (*Letter to Rev. Osmond Dobree*, p. 43) (pp. 136-7).

Its founders, as we have seen, were all clergymen. But these must soon give place to men less cultivated and with fewer gifts of ministry. . . . What else can be expected if men are true to the principle that previous preparation is sinful and dishonouring to the Spirit? The fact is, there is no originality, variety, or durability in the ministry of the Brethren. . . . The leading evangelists of the eighteenth century, whose work has had an abiding vitality, were all clergymen, like Darby and Kelly, and, perhaps, better informed than most of the ministers of their day. . . . In the last chapter we have exhibited its ascetic aspect towards the world, its protest against modern philanthropy, its isolation from all sorts and degrees of Christian fellowship outside Brethrenism. Mr. James Grant says: "I know, indeed, of no sect so utterly devoid of kindness of heart. Darbyism is the most selfish religious system with which I am acquainted" (p. 166).

The 1880's

In 1880 William Reid jumped on the anti-Brethrenism bandwagon.⁷ Likewise, his were anything but hidden charges:

At the first blush, the notions of Brethren should excite suspicion. Is it reasonable to suppose, that truths of such vast and essential

⁷Rev. William Reid, DD., *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted* (Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphant & Co, 1880).

moment — for so they represent their notions — should have remained undiscovered under the eye of minds as penetrating and holy as the Church is ever likely to be favoured with? — undiscovered not only amid ages of prevailing darkness, but in an age such as the present, when Scripture is being subjected to a scrutiny never before equalled, or if recognised and exhibited by certain theorists, only exhibited to be met with protest and dismissal. Yet, in the face of this fact, we are asked to accept these notions, in exchange for the views which the Church has ever prized as her richest boon, and to which she ascribes all the piety and practical godliness, with which she has so long blessed the world (p. 11).

Proselytism is a recognised principle with the Brethren — a principle openly avowed. The Church, according to their view, is in ruins, and their mission is to gather together its scattered members under the banner of Brethrenism. Nor are they at all scrupulous in the accomplishment of their object (p. 12).

Brethren have even been known to connect themselves with particular churches, that they might, in meetings for prayer and conference, exercise upon their intended victims the influence of church membership. . . . Indeed, their course might be traced by their leaflets, found on country roads, and in the parlours of country inns. . . . The respectability of their appearance, the suavity of their manners, and their earnest professions of a simple desire to be useful, easily gain the confidence of ministers who are longing for Christian co-operation, and secure the use of their places of worship, where meeting after meeting is held before the discovery is made, that dissension has been sown among their people, and their influence is destroyed. Not a few ministers by means such as these, have been driven from the scene of their labours, and the gathering of the Brethren has taken the place of a properly constituted dispensation of Divine ordinances (p. 13).

As no other sect was, perhaps, ever so fruitful of divisions, and as the novel doctrines propounded by some of its leaders have startled the more sober and reflective in their communion, — replies, remonstrances, and protests have been abundant. . . . (p. 20).

Lord Congleton, the associate of Mr. Groves in the earlier part of his missionary labours, and now adhering to the Open Brethren, asks — “Have you tried these Brethren — the Darbyites? I have tried

them (try the spirits whether they are of God), and found them false prophets — in every sense of the word, false. They are false in what they say of their brethren, they are false in doctrine, and they are false in their walk" (p. 21).

Dr. Tregelles gives the following specimen of their unscrupulous conduct: "Not only have bad and heterodox tracts been written, but there have emanated from Dublin, professed extracts from the writings of the Reformers and others, in which the liberty has been taken of altering their words and doctrines, so as to suit the taste and theology of the reviser. There is no intimation given of such changes having been made; all appears under some known and venerable name; so that the doctrines are ascribed to some ancient writer, which really are those of some modern Brethrenite. I am informed that such tracts have been circulated by thousands. In one case, a tract of a then living writer was appropriated, unsound doctrines were introduced; and, to the astonishment of the author, who had not been consulted, this was published as though it had been the genuine writing. When I remonstrated against such use having been made of the names of Reformers, I was told that it had been done 'for the honour of God'" ("Five Letters," pp. 22, 28, 29).

Mr. Craik of Bristol, colleague to Mr. Muller, says — "Oh, what a terrible thing is party spirit! Am I not justified in discarding and avoiding it? The truth is, Brethrenism as such, is broken to pieces. By pretending to be wiser, holier, more spiritual, more enlightened, than all other Christians; by rash and unprofitable intrusions into things not revealed; by making mysticism and eccentricity the test of spiritual life and depth; by preferring a dreamy and imaginative theology to the solid food of the Word of God; by the adoption of a strange and repulsive phraseology; by the undervaluing of practical godliness; by submission of the understanding to leading teachers; by overstraining some truths and perverting others; by encouraging the forwardness of self-conceit; by the disparagement of useful learning; by grossly offensive familiarity of speaking of such sacred matters as the presence and teaching of the Holy Ghost; and by a sectarianism. . . ." (p. 23).

Two paragraphs ago we saw Tregelles exposing unscrupulous revisionism. It would be fitting right here to add what he made known in this regard in his 1864 book: "After the opinion of a secret advent had been adopted, many expressions in older writers were regarded as supporting it; in which,

however, the word 'secret' does not mean unperceived or unknown, but simply secret in point of time. . . . Sometimes from a hymn being *altered*, writers appear to set forth a secret rapture of which they had never heard, or against which they have protested."⁸

Before I reveal the identity of the late 19th century writer who dexterously and drastically and temporarily (until now) altered what had long been the accepted version of pretrib rapture beginnings, let's look at an 1885 portrait of Darby's ministry in Ireland plus other statements about the Brethren, all of which could have given the plotter more reasons to put his revisionist plan into action.⁹

The article, authored by George Stokes and appearing in an American journal headquartered in Philadelphia, stated:

Darby . . . was for some time curate of Calary, the next parish to Powerscourt, where he imbibed the Irvingite theories about prophecy, which coincided with his natural turn of mind. He became intensely ascetic. . . . Darby lived on Calary Bog — a lofty upland a thousand feet over the sea, just beyond the Sugar Loaf mountain — in a peasant's hut. He lived the life of an ancient anchorite, like an Anthony of Egypt, or a St. Kevin of Glendalough, in his own immediate neighbourhood. His raiment was of the meanest kind, his personal appearance neglected; so neglected, indeed, that a gentleman is said to have once flung him a penny in the streets of Limerick, mistaking him for a beggar; while as regards food, his body seemed almost independent of such a casual consideration. Day and night were devoted to his pastoral work, striving to rouse his highland flock to a sense of the impending Advent (p. 544).

This tendency to asceticism and separation, joined to prophetic speculation, still, indeed, marks the followers of Darby. No true member of the Brethren will be a magistrate or take any other part in the organization of this wicked world. They will not even contribute to charitable organizations, and, like the original Quakers, are wont to regard music, painting, and similar recreations, as coming under those lusts of the flesh and of the eye which Scripture so strongly

⁸S. P. Tregelles, *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*, pp. 35-6.

⁹George T. Stokes, "John Nelson Darby" (*The Contemporary Review*, July-Dec., 1885), pp. 537-52.

denounces. From Irving, then, Darby derived his prophetic system, which became one of the most prominent features of his system, and one of the rocks, too, on which that system was rent asunder (p. 545).

The year 1848 was marked by a division, which has never since been healed, but has been the cause of as much heartburning and bitterness as any religious feud that ever existed. . . . Since that quarrel the Brethren have everywhere been split into two camps — the Open Brethren and the Exclusives — both of which will be found in the obscurer parts of all our towns; for the Exclusives alone, a few years ago, returned their number at 750 congregations in the United Kingdom. The spirit of division has, however, increased as years rolled on, and the Brethren who started only half a century ago to present the world with the spectacle of a visibly united communion, have ended by creating a fresh schism in their own ranks every five or six years. There are now no less than five great hostile sections of them. The Exclusives are divided into Darbyites, Kellyites, and Cluffites; the Open Brethren into Mullerites, or the Bethesda party, and Newtonians. As for Darby, he pursued the even tenor of his way till the end came; developing, however, strangely enough ever higher and higher claims for his own party. Those who agreed with him were the Church of God upon earth. Those who disagreed with him on any point of doctrine or of discipline, he excommunicated at once, and regarded as outside the covenanted mercies of God (pp. 551-2).

If you've read the preceding excerpts, you've seen several mentions of the name of the plotter. Still wondering? The plotter was none other than the one destined to be the editor of Darby's works — William Kelly (1820-1906)!

Kelly and Darby had some things in common. Both, of course, were members of the Brethren. Both held tenaciously to the pretrib rapture. Both were of Irish extraction. (Although Darby was born in London, his Irish ancestry through his father was centuries old.) Both were graduates of Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland; both were awarded honors in classics.

Although it's hard to tell which of these two was the first to suggest that Darby's works should be edited and put into volumes, it's apparent that Darby was impressed by Kelly's outstanding literary ability and gave Kelly's project his blessing.

It's also evident that Kelly, grateful to the famous prophecy teacher, purposed to portray Darby in the best possible light. But when we critically examine Kelly's unorthodox and unacceptable methods in this respect, we're forced to conclude that he himself should be appraised in a most opposite kind of light.

Kelly was completely familiar with Darby's later embellishments of his earliest thoughts. He also knew that Darby wasn't averse to being viewed as the originator of an idea (we've noted Darby's statement that he saw himself as the first to believe in the renewed existence of Babylon). Thus Kelly, early on, must have had a clear picture of what Darby expected of him.

That Darby had knowledge of — and was agreeable to — Kelly's revising is seen in an 1865 Darby letter written in Toronto, Ontario and addressed to Kelly:

Dearest _____, _____ I had forgotten your enterprise, and am frightened when I see the extent of the publications. I should think some of the Notes would require some revising, but I have no objection to them if they are useful being printed as Notes. Even the sermons contain things I should not accept; they were first published with a notice that I had not revised them. *Some* of the earlier publications would require a note or two, where clearer light was acquired, but had better not be altered.¹⁰

After the word "enterprise" in the first sentence was a footnote which said in explanation: "Collected Writings."

Several months later during the same year, Darby said in a letter: "_____ wanted to publish a series of my papers, and I had to look over them. And I found tracts I had wholly forgotten, written thirty-three to thirty-eight years ago — all the truth as to the principles on which the fate of the world now hangs, I doubt not at all, put clearly out."¹¹

He was referring to his 1827-1832 works which, confirmed by our analysis, didn't teach pretrib or even underly-

¹⁰J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 397.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 406.

ing “truths” leading to it. And since he said he then had possession of his *earliest writings*, and wasn’t relying only on memory, he knew as well as anyone why Kelly would have to affix “maturation” footnotes to them!

A third Darby letter in 1865 stated: “Hymns are more important than we often suppose, because the affections get engaged religiously with what is incorrect; so that if you could, I would translate the ones we have; if not possible, I would correct the others, which at any rate would hinder a part of their associations of heart with false doctrine.”¹²

Recall Tregelles’ charges that the Brethren changed older writings, including hymns, to make it appear that they had taught a secret, pretrib rapture!

But wasn’t this self-defeating, that is, Darby-defeating? How could they claim that Darby had “recovered” the pretrib rapture idea from only the Bible if, at the same time, they claimed that pre-Darby writings had “recovered” it earlier?

Initially Kelly’s job was crediting while editing — crediting Darby while editing his writings.

Only after leading voices of the 1870’s and 1880’s uniformly and repeatedly honored Darby’s chief competition did Kelly realize that he’d have to launch a full-scale attack on the same competition: the Irvingites.

But for now, during the 1860’s, Kelly concentrated on boosting Darby. This seems to be the beginning of his

Pre-Plot Practicing

One can’t spend much time in Darby’s reprinted works without soon noticing the unscholarly, haphazard way in which they are presented.

My 1983 book deplored the way footnotes are used in these reprints: “Speaking of footnotes, which abound in his writings, it’s often hard to tell who wrote them, and when. We’re not told if Darby himself had an added thought during

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 413.

the initial writing, or if the footnote was Darby's explanation taken from one of his later writings, or if the footnote was an explanation coming from William Kelly, the editor. Sometimes a footnote appears in brackets along with 'Ed.' At other times brackets are used without 'Ed.'"

The same book also pointed out that unsigned phrases, within brackets, appear even *within* the text — and that the earliest Irvingite writings never had to resort to the “maturation” tactics employed in Darby's earliest works!¹³

A footnote at the beginning of Darby's 1830 article says that “it was not worth while either suppressing or changing” anything in this work!¹⁴

If someone says he isn't in the habit of swimming in *muddy* lakes, would you assume that he doesn't swim in clear lakes or that he doesn't swim at all?

If Kelly wasn't in the habit of suppressing or changing Darby's words, or wasn't at least open to such practice, how can we account for such an incredible footnote? The natural assumption is that he was at least open to this revisionist practice even if he didn't employ it in the 1830 item.

Evangelicals have long accused “non-Christian cults” of doing this with their own earliest documents, but have they said that such groups flaunt — or even admit to — such practice?

In the light of Darby's 1865 letter to Kelly that his earliest works “had better not be altered,” why did Kelly show that at least he didn't oppose such literary revisionism? Even if he never omitted or changed Darby's words, Kelly knew that having “mature” footnotes could produce just as “seasoned” a Darby in the minds of readers!

Let's now look at an 1834 Darby work. In it he speaks of “the intrinsic excellence and value with the beauty of the kingdom, and the judgment of the visible church, the net-full gathered out of the sea.” After the word “kingdom” Kelly adds, within brackets, “the gathering of the good first into vessels.” (Brack-

¹³Dave MacPherson, *The Great Rapture Hoax*, pp. 152-3.

¹⁴J. N. Darby, “On ‘Days’” etc. (1830), Prop. No. 1, p. 32.

ets are used several times in this work to “mature” Darby.)¹⁵

The word “first” in this bracketed insertion is itself revisionism; Matthew 13:48 says only “the good into vessels”; by adding “first” he can have Darby in 1834 teaching a prior rapture of the “good” — and also have Darby contradicting Matthew 13:30 where the wicked ones are gathered “first”!

Kelly knew that the Irvingites clearly taught pretrib as early as September 1830. One wonders why Kelly didn’t put such bracketed insertions inside Darby’s *pre-1830* works!

The preface to a footnote at the end of an 1835 Darby work states that it was “written later” but doesn’t reveal its date or author.¹⁶

After a lengthy search, I discovered that practically all of this “mature” footnote — more than 80 words — is in an undated Darby piece appearing between works dated 1849 and 1852 (when Darby was obviously well-developed!).¹⁷

Earlier we observed that in Darby’s 1839 treatise “Notes on the Revelation,” he finally teaches a recognizable pretrib rapture and repeatedly bases it on Revelation 12’s “man child.” But manipulation also abounds here.¹⁸

One footnote, contradicting his Revelation 12 basis, sees “the church . . . in the heavens from the end of chapter 3. It is quite done with on earth there.”¹⁹

Another footnote says: “. . . after the catching up of the saints, i.e., before or in the period of the first four or five seals.”²⁰ These seals are in Revelation 6. This and the preceding footnote contradict each other as well as his Revelation 12 basis!

¹⁵J. N. Darby, “The Dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven” (1834), Prop. No. 1, pp. 59, 60, 63.

¹⁶J. N. Darby, “Scope of Prophecy” (1835), Prop. No. 1, p. 52.

¹⁷J. N. Darby, “Questions of Interest as to Prophecy” (1849-52), Prop. No. 2, p. 227.

¹⁸J. N. Darby, “Notes on the Revelation” (1839), Prop. No. 1, pp. 165-265.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 195.

Concerning the catching up, one footnote declares: "I have no doubt *it* is contained in the catching up of the man-child, as well as Christ Himself."²¹ As noted before, this was rewritten from an 1865 Darby work and added to this less developed 1839 treatise!

On the next page a footnote states that the church is "in heaven (as we have often seen) from the end of chapter 3" — more maturation and another contradiction of Darby's Revelation 12 basis!²²

Two pages later Darby's work says indecisively: "The saints may be united to the position of the man-child when removed hence and taken to Christ." But a footnote on the same page says unhesitatingly: "I apprehend the proper application of the catching up of the man-child, besides Christ, to be to the Church of the first-born — His body. . . ." (!)²³

Concerning one of Darby's comments in his "Chapter 18" section, Kelly remarks in a footnote: "I have left this statement as it is, though its full force may be questioned. . . ." (One wonders how much Kelly didn't leave alone!)²⁴

We've previously noted that a chart (listing no artist or date) accompanying this work shows the church in heaven no later than Revelation 4 — additional manipulation and further contradiction of Darby's Revelation 12 basis!²⁵

On April 29, 1882, John Nelson Darby went to his eternal reward. During his 81 years he had lived long enough to see the fellowship that had been founded on "unity" degenerate into bitter, competing splinter groups; his insistence on certain aspects of unfulfilled prophecy was a major factor in bringing about such unfortunate factionalism.

Darby also lived long enough to see Brethren as well as non-Brethren uniformly crediting the Irvingites with the end-

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 213.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 214.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 216.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 245-6.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 264.

time view that Darby had often said was always predominant in his soul. His later exaggerations of his earliest “thoughts” had done nothing to wipe away the Irvingite record. And Kelly’s footnotes and bracketed insertions in Darby’s official writings had been just as ineffective.

Now that Darby was gone, was there anything that Kelly could do to further honor his late friend and mentor? Indeed there was and Kelly had no time to lose. It was already the 1880’s and Kelly was well into his sixties. Although he believed in a pretrib rapture that could happen at any moment, he was probably hoping that it wouldn’t happen before he could find a way to immortalize Darby in regard to the any-moment, pretrib rapture!

But what should he do with those pesky Irvingites? It was embarrassing the way they managed to keep on popping up in public articles that they themselves hadn’t written!

Well, if others could publicize the Irvingites, so could Kelly. In fact, his own British periodical that he’d edited since 1856, *The Bible Treasury*, would be most happy to have him do a lengthy series of articles on the Irvingites, wouldn’t it? After his treatment of Irvingite history and doctrines, who on either side of the Atlantic would dare to continue crediting the Irvingites with pretrib?

VII

THE RAPTURE PLOT

First of all, before we scrutinize William Kelly's masterpiece of deception, I have a confession to make. I confess that without the help of R. A. Huebner, one of Kelly's biggest fans of the present time, I might never have found out about this revisionist plot. Here's the story:

Even though Huebner and I have disagreed on the pretrib origin, we've shared photocopies of rapture-related documents with each other over the years. As examples, I've sent him copies of pages in Robert Norton's 1861 book and he's sent me copies of pages in Lady Powerscourt's 1838 *Letters and Papers*, edited by Robert Daly. Huebner has long majored on Darby and his friends while my own focus has been on Irving and his friends.

After Huebner mentioned in 1991 that Kelly's journal discusses Irvingism's history, I thought that photocopies of this discussion would be a good addition to my collection of several thousand rapture-related documents (many of them on microfilm).

So I phoned Huebner, wondering if he had the Kelly material I needed. Even though he had everything, and even though he was then retired from his secular work and conceivably had more free time, he told me that he was too busy.

Only after I obtained this material from other sources did I understand Huebner's first-time reluctance. Even though I'd revealed some cover-ups of the past, what I was

seeing on the pages of *The Bible Treasury*, Kelly's journal, had to be the "mother of all cover-ups"!

Huebner could have known all along, from just the Irvingite sources that he includes in his books, that Kelly was a masterful revisionist — so clever that no one until now seems to have known about, and also had the courage to expose, this plot.

Since Huebner, a Brethren member, has long credited Darby and emulated Kelly and promoted the pretrib rapture, you will soon see why he was less than helpful the day I phoned him. But in his own way he did "help" me.

With this behind us, let's see how Kelly engineered his scheme to defraud the Irvingites.

If books do more than merely list Kelly's name as the editor of Darby's works, they seldom do more than add that he was a brilliant controversialist.

This is readily apparent in his series of articles entitled "The Catholic Apostolic Body, or Irvingites" which ran in installments in *The Bible Treasury* (which he edited) from February 1889 through December 1890 — a total of 22 articles (my sources could find no installment in the December 1889 issue¹).

We now begin our two-year trek through the unexplored territory of the William Kelly who, for unaware 20th century copyists, adroitly changed the face of pretrib beginnings. Our first stopover is

February 1889

The first two paragraphs in Kelly's first installment exhibit some techniques he used throughout his series. My comments follow them:

In tracing the first manifestations of that which issued in the establishment of this society, two publications furnish considerable help. One is Dr. R. Norton's "Restoration of Apostles and Prophets;

¹Neither Drew University in Madison, New Jersey nor Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, Iowa.

in the Catholic Apostolic Church (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 215, Regent Street, 1861),” the other, and far earlier pamphlet, “Narrative of Facts, characterizing the Spiritual Manifestations in members of Mr. Irving’s congregation, and other individuals in England and Scotland, and formerly in the writer himself. By Robert Baxter. Second Edition, &c. London: James Nisbet, Berners Street, 1833.” The “Morning Watch” (7 vols. 8vo.), which changed its publisher from J. Nisbet with whom it appeared in March 1829, to James Fraser for vol. iv., closing somewhat abruptly in 1833, will afford illustrative matter; for it was therein that the chief men made their first public stand and defence, as it was there that their heterodoxy was keenly defended, though broached, taught, and circulated very fully and in every form elsewhere. Among the various authorities I have writings of their accepted apostles, prophets, angels, &c. Nor must one omit to name the Rev. E. Miller’s History and Doctrines of Irvingism, &c. (2 Vols. cr. 8vo., London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1, Paternoster Square, 1878), which presents a very full and painstaking account of the system, with such a judgment of it as might be expected from a clergyman of decided Anglican views.

Mr. M. devotes four preliminary chapters to (1) predisposing causes, (2) Edward Irving, (3) early meetings at Mr. Drummond’s (Albury), and (4) the early prophesyings and tongues in Scotland. Though interesting we may pass these over and come to the utterances in London, which followed two things gravely to be weighed: continual prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit; and Mr. Irving’s heterodoxy on the humanity of Christ, as fallen like every other’s, save that He never sinned. Dr. N. devotes his first two chapters (pp. 1-71) to what he calls “the outpouring of the Spirit of God in Scotland,” and “in England”; as in the second (p. 40) he does not disguise the connexion of the movement with Mr. Irving’s doctrine that the Saviour assumed fallen human nature in the virgin’s womb (p. 219).

1. William Kelly’s four sources — Norton, Baxter, *The Morning Watch*, and Miller — could lead readers to believe that he would be giving a scholarly, thorough, and impartial series on Irvingism. Although he extensively quoted Norton, Baxter, and Miller (secondary sources that all mentioned or quoted *The Morning Watch*), his quotation of this Irvingite journal (his only primary source) was restricted to only eight paragraphs discussing non-pretrib matters. He even said that this important journal “will afford illustrative matter” (was it

necessary to mention its change of publishers?) and called it “their one joint organ” (May 1890, p. 76) and “their accredited organ” (December 1890, p. 190) — but included none of the quotes found in the present book!

2. In order to present the Irvingites in the worst possible light, Kelly largely focused on Irving’s “heterodoxy” concerning Christ’s human nature and on the “tongues.” You may recall that when pretrib was first publicly aired in the Irvingite journal in 1830, these same two unrelated topics accidentally took attention away from the new escapist view. But now, 59 years later, Kelly deliberately used them as a smoke screen so that his non-charismatic, “orthodox” readers would view the Irvingites unfavorably and continue to honor Darby.

3. Since Kelly had long wanted to credit Darby with pretrib, his main goal in this series was to use words in such a shrewd manner that his readers would never suspect that the Irvingites did, in fact, teach pretrib. And note (second paragraph) his familiarity with the Scottish circumstances (all of which pointed to Margaret’s pretrib) but also his willingness to “pass these over”!

4. I quickly noticed that Kelly had two copying errors in Norton’s book title including one missing word. Over the years I’ve obtained copies of all four of the above Kelly sources; it was nothing less than shocking to discover that he had 1345 copying errors when quoting others including many omitted, added, and changed words; since his quotation occurred on only 29 pages out of the 83 pages in the entire series, his rate of copying error was much greater than those discussed in the Appendix A at the back of the present book. One can easily conclude that he was nervously looking over his shoulder while purposely engineering his subtle revisionism — the reason why he managed to achieve the astounding average of 46 copying errors per page! (Incidentally, promotion of his own prophetic views occupied many of the pages not devoted to quoting others.)

Having observed that Kelly desired to avoid the most important Irvingite source (*The Morning Watch*), that he emphasized topics not bearing on pretrib, and that he blithely passed over what even his secondary sources deemed significant, let's analyze the remainder of his first installment.

After plagiarizing 27 words found on Robert Norton's page 47, omitting 10 words while briefly quoting Norton, and stating that Irving was ordained in 1802 (Kelly was two decades too early), two pages later (p. 222) Kelly furnished us with his first attempt to cover up someone's belief in pretrib. He wrote that Baxter "used to think of some earthly sanctuary in and through the days of vengeance, but had experienced a sudden change of opinion. . . ." Kelly's readers were left to guess how Robert Baxter changed his opinion some time before January 1832.

But Baxter's book (pp. 17-18) revealed that he changed from posttrib to his new belief that "the translation of the saints" would precede "the day of vengeance." He tied this "translation" to Revelation 11. (We've seen in the chapter on Irving, III-2, that as early as June of 1831 the Irvingites were clearly teaching a rapture before the last 1260 days of what was then expressed as the tribulation — days *following* Revelation 11.)

In the next paragraph (p. 222) Kelly paraphrased what Baxter's new belief involved: ". . . the man of sin was the spirit of the world in the church" and "by and by he would be a more fearful manifestation. . . ."

Here's what Baxter actually wrote (pp. 30-31) and what Kelly deleted: "The revelation of the man of sin *mystically*, was declared to be the manifestation of the spirit of Satan ruling in the church. . . ." And then "would God take away his Spirit and his church altogether from the earth, by causing his faithful spiritual church to be caught up to heaven like Elijah" before the "final development of the personal man of sin. . . ." Kelly's paraphrase touched on both the *mystical* and *personal* aspects of Antichrist but skipped past Baxter's

belief in a literal rapture preceding the final Antichrist!

Page 223 featured two additional Kelly cover-ups. Paraphrasing another Baxter detail, he wrote: “The man child was the testimony by preaching Christ’s Second Coming. . . .” True enough, but he avoided saying which second coming “stage” was represented by the man child. We know that at that time Baxter and other Irvingites believed that their pretrib rapture was symbolized by Revelation 11’s witnesses as well as by Revelation 12’s man child.

Finally, Kelly referred briefly to what Baxter wrote on page 62 and also at the end of his page 63. Again he bypassed Baxter’s in-between revelation that he had adopted pretrib: “the saints would be caught up to the Lord,” said Baxter, “and the earth wholly given up to the days of vengeance” — days that he tied to “the personal man of sin.”

So, five times on his first five pages Kelly covered up those who’d taught pretrib long before Darby had!

March 1889

On page 234 Kelly had lengthy quotes from pages 77 and 80 in Baxter’s work. In between these pages Baxter included what Kelly avoided. Baxter wrote that “the translation of the saints” — “*they who remain alive unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up to meet him in the air*” — “is contained in Rev. xi.” By tying this rapture to Revelation 11, Baxter again demonstrated his pretrib rapturism (pp. 78-79).

April 1889

Although the April installment omitted 48 words while quoting excerpts in Baxter’s book, Kelly found no occasion to omit pretrib doctrine in Irvingite writings.

May 1889

At the end of this installment, comprised of more quota-

tion of Baxter, Kelly declared that Baxter's testimony was "the most important" testimony he knew of on "the real character of the Irvingite movement." To Kelly, the real character had to do with Irving's Incarnation "heresy" and the "tongues," the two items he was greatly interested in while reviewing Baxter. But Kelly had to have known that earlier 19th century writers had uniformly agreed that *pretrib* was Irvingism's important contribution and hallmark and that many *pre-Irving* writers had advocated "tongues" as well as speculated about Christ's humanity. So again Kelly skillfully buried the *real* Irvingite contribution.

June 1889

We've noted that Kelly had been reluctant to admit that Baxter for a short time adopted the *pretrib* view; he gave the impression that this early Irvingite held all along to some variation of *posttrib*. But Baxter (p. 114) revealed that he finally returned to his original *posttrib* position. Kelly, while quoting Baxter's page 112 and page 116, passed over his page 114; he knew that if he revealed that Baxter eventually moved back to *posttrib*, then his readers would know that Baxter must have temporarily held to something quite different — a view that Kelly wanted to steal from the Irvingites!

July 1889

Again Kelly saw no opportunity to cover up *pretrib* teaching by the Irvingites but dwelt on unrelated issues.

August 1889

In this installment Kelly extensively quoted pages 108-110 in Norton's 1861 book. But he passed by Norton's statement, six pages earlier, expressing doctrine taught by Irvingites while Darby was still undeveloped: "... the prior gathering from among them of a spiritual remnant as the first

fruits of the future whole. . . .” Norton expressed this more clearly on his page 155: “The only hope is that which hath been ever the hope of the Church, to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be ever with Him; saved from the snare of the temptation and the great tribulation which are coming upon the earth.” Clear pretrib statements such as this last one that were found in Norton’s work were consistently ignored in this Kelly series that supposedly analyzed the Irvingites in a comprehensive manner!

September 1889

On page 330 in this installment Kelly wrote: “The time had been longingly expected according to Mr. Baxter’s interpretation of Rev. xi. ‘The ever memorable’ 14th July, 1835 was to be preceded by a week of waiting on the Lord, ‘Who at the end of that time would perform His promise.’”

For those thoroughly conversant with Irvingite data, Kelly’s two sentences unfold a classic 19th century tale of intrigue. To begin:

We’ve been shown and reminded that as early as June 1831 the Irvingites unmistakably taught a rapture before Revelation’s last 1260 days. During Irvingism’s earliest rapture development, Baxter was part of this British group and even had some personal revelations. One of these set a date for the rapture, the countdown running for 1260 days from January 14, 1832 to July 14, 1835. His rapture was based on the catching up of Revelation 11’s two witnesses, an event that he said would be followed by the final 1260 days. In effect, Baxter’s scheme was a future seven-year period: 1260 days of preparation before the rapture, followed by 1260 days of the tribulation.

Readers may be surprised to learn that historical revisionism was rife among 19th century prophecy students including the Irvingites! But the Irvingites had no reason to later deny that they had been the earliest pretrib developers.

Their weakness was looking back, after a fizzled rapture date-setting, and claiming that the prophecy in question had predicted something completely different.

Here are some samples of historical revisionism by leading Irvingites, all of them looking back to Baxter's prediction that the pretrib rapture would occur on July 14, 1835:

In 1847 Francis V. Woodhouse, who was the last surviving Irvingite "apostle" before he died in 1901, issued his *Narrative of Events* (which was stamped "Printed for Private Circulation").²

On page 39 he wrote that his church had been anticipating July 14, 1835, because they felt that on that day "the Lord would fulfill His promise," adding on page 46 that the fulfillment was "the separation of the Apostles."

In 1861 Irvingite historian Robert Norton said that his church had been expecting that "when the ever memorable 14th of July arrived" the "Lord . . . would fulfil His promise."³

In 1868 Charles William Boase, who had been ordained to the Irvingite priesthood in 1836, stated on page 815 in his *Supplementary Narrative* ("Printed for Private Circulation"):

"One of the words of prophecy uttered by Robert Baxter, at his visit to Regent Square Church, early in 1832, was to the effect, that from a set time 1260 days should be counted, at the close of which period some great gift should be bestowed. The day thus indicated was the 14th July 1835." He added in the next paragraph that on this day "the Lord would fulfil his promise. . . ."⁴

None of these Irvingites wanted to admit that Baxter had prophesied a date for the rapture that had failed. As revisionists they merely said that Baxter had predicted something notable, Woodhouse suggesting that Baxter had had

²Francis V. Woodhouse, *A Narrative of Events* etc. (1847), 143 pp.

³Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets* etc. (1861), p. 133.

⁴C. W. Boase, *Supplementary Narrative to the Elijah Ministry* (1868), pp. numbered 720-840.

Apostolic (and not rapture) separation in mind! Their motive was not to cover up the *fact* of their early belief in a pretrib rapture; they only wanted to cover up the *failure* in setting a date for it.

On the other hand Kelly, who usually didn't mind airing Irvingite failures, didn't dare mention this one; if he'd admitted that Baxter's failure was tied to pretrib, his more astute readers would have realized that the Irvingites had indeed taught it while Darby was still undeveloped and indecisive. This may have been the only time Kelly used the same revisionism the Irvingites used — but for a different reason.

October 1889

Once again Kelly discussed more aspects of Irvingism without attempting to revise any of their prophetic history.

November 1889

This installment, only two pages long, featured five cover-ups, two of them on page 365:

Kelly wrote that the Irvingite “apostolate” was “raised up to prepare the bride for the returning of the Bridegroom” — but failed to describe the return as a pretrib one.

And he said that the Irvingites put their faith “in a constantly to be expected Lord” — without mentioning that this, to them, was a pretrib event.

On page 366 of this installment the Brethren revisionist had three more instances of cover-up:

Kelly referred to the Irvingites looking for “the Lord's Appearing.” He was well aware that in 1889 his Brethren readers understood “appearing” as referring to only the final “stage” in their pretrib rapture view, and that they could easily assume when he employed this term that the Irvingites held to the posttrib rapture position. What Kelly failed to convey to his readers is that during the earliest development

of both the Irvingites and the Brethren this term was applied to the first “stage,” that by the 1850’s Darby reversed himself and began applying it to only the final “stage,” and that during their later development the Irvingites continued to apply “appearing” to their first (pretrib) “stage.”

He then had a brief comment on a non-related topic that Norton discussed in an incidental manner in his own book (pp. 183-4). Amazingly enough, he ran head-on into Norton’s larger discussion (pp. 183-5) on the “first fruits” who are “taken away” by rapture before “the great tribulation” — but after this close scrape still maintained silence in regard to Irvingism’s most ballyhooed belief!

Kelly then added that to the Irvingites “sealing was avowedly to exempt from the great tribulation.” But the word “exempt” has a double meaning. It can mean either “raptured away before” or “preserved on earth during.” What Kelly didn’t reveal was that when the Irvingites put “exempt” and “first fruits” together, they always meant “raptured away before”!

January 1890

In this first installment during the (unperverted) Gay Nineties, Kelly again perverted what the Irvingites taught when he spoke of “the Zoar they offer all who seek sealing at their hands” (p. 13). “Zoar” was an earthly refuge to which Lot fled before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Gen. 19:23). By using “Zoar” here, this disciple and defender of Darby gave the misleading impression that the Irvingites’ hope was only an earthly refuge during a future tribulation instead of their actual hope of a pretrib rapture.

February 1890

On page 27 Kelly presented a less than faithful portrayal of Irvingite belief: “. . . the faithful to meet the coming Lord

in the air, the faithless to sink into the corrupt or apostate evils that await His day.” If he had faithfully and honestly presented the Irvingite position, he would have stated their belief like this: “. . . the faithful to meet the coming Lord in the air, the faithless to pass through the final tribulation.” By watering down the Irvingites’ final tribulation into merely “the corrupt or apostate evils” — evils that Kelly and his friends constantly saw all around themselves in 1890 — he pictured an end-time scenario from which not even Brethren would have had to be raptured!

On the next page Kelly demonstrated that, whereas he was unable to mirror pretrib when Irvingites taught it, he was quite capable of expressing it when he and his followers taught it. He wrote that in Revelation 15:

we see another company of saints at the close who come off victors over the Beast and over his image and over the number of his name, not by any means characterised as the elders, yet singularly honoured, standing upon the sea of glass, and having harps of gold [sic]. But in their case the sea is as it were glass “mingled with fire.” These do pass through the fiery tribulation at the end of the age, whereas the saints symbolised by the elders were caught up before; even as the Lord had promised the faithful who were awaiting His advent, to keep them out of the hour of temptation which is about to come upon the whole habitable world (Rev. iii.).

But now we come to one of the most daring cover-ups of all. In the mid-1830’s Irvingite leaders had composed a book-length document called “The Great Testimony” and eventually presented copies of it in person to many of Europe’s most influential civil and religious leaders including the Pope and the Austrian emperor. Much of this document dealt with Irvingism’s views on biblical prophecy.

At the end of this February installment, Kelly quoted 77 lines of it. Although he called it “their most authoritative document,” *The Morning Watch* had been much more authoritative and detailed in terms of clear pretrib teaching. Since he wanted to give at least a semblance of having ana-

lyzed some important Irvingite data, he chose this document over what he labeled “their accredited organ,” that is, *The Morning Watch*.

“The Great Testimony” was hardly an unknown document. It had been duplicated and promulgated many times. Norton’s 1861 book (pp. 154-6) had included its most important section. And so had Miller’s 1878 work (Vol. I, pp. 433-5). Kelly was aware of both of these reproductions. In fact, he said in a footnote on his own page 30 that he was citing Miller’s.

While copying Miller’s version, Kelly seemed to be more nervous than normal. So nervous that he came up with 45 copying errors (including omitted and changed wording) in just these 77 lines — an average of about one error in every other line!

He had always been nervous whenever he’d tried to “mature” Darby’s earliest writings by adding footnotes rewritten from his later works and by putting bracketed “explanations” even within Darby’s text. But now his aim was to discredit the Irvingites.

In the final paragraph that Kelly devoted to quoting this document, there were roughly 22 lines of actual quotation. Within these lines Kelly used approximately seven lines to insert his own anti-Irvingism editorializing — sometimes exclamation points inside parentheses but most of the time entire sentences within brackets. Examples of what was bracketed: “Here their unfailing and presumptuous self-assertion betrays itself” and “! the usual ignorance. . . .”

Now that Kelly’s readers wouldn’t even think of giving credit to the Irvingites, he could maintain their non-thinking by omitting two items that could make them think.

He abruptly broke off his last quoted sentence. The rest of the sentence, Irvingism’s own words, told about “the manifested first-fruits unto God and the Lamb” — a “first” company which the Irvingites marked for a pretrib rapture, as we’ve often seen.

And the very next paragraph of this document, also deleted by Kelly, spoke of being “caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be ever with Him, saved from the snare of the temptation and the great tribulation which are coming upon the earth.”

The Irvingites had repeatedly aired this pretrib teaching, teaching they’d published as early as the September 1830 issue of their leading publication. And Norton (in 1861) and Miller (in 1878) had also aired it. But now it had been Kelly’s chance to again put asunder the Irvingism and pretribism that had long been joined together.

March 1890

Kelly wrote: “There is no doubt that those ‘sealed’ in Rev. vii. are supposed to have an appropriate blessing thereby. To apply this to a special time for some of the church, which no Christians had enjoyed for ages previously, nor yet do the great mass at that very time (and such is the Irvingite interpretation), is not only infatuation and arrogant self-complacency, but such a subversion of every Christian’s most essential privilege as could not be entertained for a moment by any soul that understood what the church of God is.”

Again (p. 45) he couldn’t admit that Irvingism’s “sealed” ones expected a pretrib rapture and not merely “an appropriate blessing” or “a special time”!

April 1890

In this segment Kelly admitted (p. 58) that “Mr. Irving indeed had light on at least the essential difference between Israel and the church.”

He could have admitted also that the Irvingites taught the next step (a church/Israel “dichotomy,” or separation, during a future tribulation) as early as December 1831 while Darby in 1834 still had the church and the Jews waiting to-

gether for the same final advent without any such separation. But of course Kelly didn't.

May 1890

You will remember that as early as 1827 Irving's preliminary discourse (in the first Lacunza volume) expressed all of Darby's underlying "thoughts" long before Darby expressed them.

Well, in this segment (p. 75) Kelly not only mentioned this Irving discourse but even quoted various pages in it following the 1825 section. He thus showed his awareness that Darby never should have been credited with the "thoughts" supposedly evolving into pretrib!

On the same page Kelly accused Irving of repeatedly "leaving out the last words" of Hebrews 4:15 when quoting it. Had Kelly forgotten so soon that he himself chopped off quotation in Irvingism's "The Great Testimony" in order to cover up their pretrib teaching? He ended this piece by charging the Irvingites with "every effort to hide, evade, and explain away, so characteristic of the party"!

June, July 1890

In both of these installments Kelly discussed aspects of Irvingism unrelated to their prophetic doctrine.

August 1890

On page 125 Kelly finally got around to stating that the Irvingites placed their rapture at "the catching up of the manchild" in Revelation 12. But then he gave the impression that since the rapture occurs before Revelation 4 (the position the Brethren finally arrived at by 1890), the Irvingites really didn't hold to pretrib but to what is viewed today as the midtrib view.

What Kelly didn't reveal was that for decades Darby had

also placed his pretrib rapture at the same Revelation 12 symbol, and that he adopted this in the late 1830's only after the Irvingites had taught it years earlier!

September, October 1890

In both of these installments, dealing mainly with Irvingite doctrine concerning priesthood, sacraments, and tithes, Kelly (as he constantly did throughout his series) accused the Irvingites of "Judaising" that "stops short of christianity [*sic*]." This group, he said, was "in principle Jewish" and "more guilty than others."

November 1890

Kelly now analyzed Irvingism's usage of, and reliance on, symbols. His condemnation: "Judaising," "effusions of naturalism," "a retreat from the true light" and so on.

His rebuke of symbols used in Irvingite worship drew attention away from the fact that the development of pretrib itself was based not on explicit scriptural statements but on *symbols* in the book of Revelation including "Philadelphia," "John," the 144,000, the "two witnesses," and the "man child." By the end of the 1800's, advocates had settled primarily on either "Philadelphia" or "John" or the (symbolic?) *blank space* between Revelation 3 and Revelation 4!

December 1890

In this series wrap-up, Kelly wrote (p. 189) that the Irvingites "justly insist on His coming to receive us" — but still wouldn't admit that they embraced a pretrib coming.

Two pages later he said, concerning the taking up of "Jewish elements," that "nowhere is this so patent as in Irvingism."

He concluded: "... if they hold out a hope, it is not the proper translation of the whole church of God (and of the

O. T. saints also) to meet the Lord on high, and so be ever with Him, but a perverted use of Zoar in Genesis, and of the sealed in Rev. vii., and of those that follow the Lamb on Zion, as an inducement to accept their spurious apostolate and join their party. Alas ! what is this but self-deception?"

This is how William Kelly ended his lengthy anti-Irvingism series. He'd had numerous opportunities and two years to give credit where credit was due. Even though he came close at times, not once did he let down his guard long enough to stain the memory of his dear departed friend and mentor, John Nelson Darby.

Still there were many that Kelly hadn't convinced, many who still believed that the pretribulation rapture view had descended from either Irving or one of his friends. One of these believers was Robert Cameron, a Canadian fundamentalist and a holder of the historic posttribulation rapture view.

Cameron's Opposition

During 1902 Cameron wrote a series of articles for the publication he edited, *Watchword and Truth*, that continued to credit Irvingism with the pretrib rapture, articles that evidently helped to trigger a further outburst from Kelly the following year.⁵

Even before this series Cameron had been pointing at the same British group. This accusation had angered a rival (pretrib) publication, *Our Hope*, which was edited in New York by Arno Gaebelein.

Larry Crutchfield tells us that none other than C. I. Scofield himself came to *Our Hope's* defense and in its February 1902 issue retorted: "We cannot . . . allow the statement to stand that 'until the days of Edward Irving, who was excluded from the Presbyterian Church for heresy, no one ever heard of this 'coming for' and 'coming with' His saints.'"

⁵"To the Friends of Prophetic Truth," *Watchword and Truth* (Boston), Robert Cameron, editor, May-Dec., 1902.

Scofield added that if Cameron would check out Zechariah 14:4-5, “he will learn of a statement concerning the *coming with* which considerably antedates Edward Irving.”⁶

But Scofield, who had practiced law, was being as cagey as Kelly. All involved in the squabble knew the pre-1830 believers had long looked for only one coming that contained the *for* aspect as well as the *with* aspect, aspects they obviously couldn’t have turned into *separate-coming* expressions!

Even the classic *for* passage, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, doesn’t say that Christ comes “for” anyone, but it does say He comes “with” departed saints (vs. 14) — the same “with” found in Zechariah 14:5. After the *for* aspect was stretched forward in 1830 and turned into a separate (pretrib) coming, both insiders and outsiders referred to the “coming for” and “coming with.” But a separate and prior “coming for” was the only new idea.

Scofield evaded Cameron’s phraseology when he didn’t offer any Scripture mentioning a coming “for” and also didn’t show any pre-1830 usage of “coming for” in connection with a separate, prior coming. Cameron could have evaded Scofield’s deviousness if he’d simply said that pre-Irving believers never heard of a separate “coming for” or pretrib coming.

Cameron’s eight-installment series began in May of 1902. The second paragraph in this issue included Kelly’s name in a list of Brethren who had influenced Cameron before his later change to posttrib. (He gave no indication that he knew of Kelly’s anti-Irvingism series.) Cameron then discussed Brethrenism’s main emphasis:

“The Teaching, which is distinctively a doctrine of the ‘Brethren’ is, what is sometimes called, the secret rapture of the church, or, what will be better understood as the belief, that the Lord will come, and change the living and raise the sleeping saints, and take them to himself, before the great tribulation” (p. 135).

⁶Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism*, pp. 191-2.

In June he quoted the "Watch . . . worthy to escape" verse (Luke 21:36), adding: "This, I have since found, is *the* great Scripture on which the doctrine of 'any moment' rapture, *before* tribulation, and without warning, is supposed to stand" (p. 170). (Both Margaret and *The Morning Watch* used Luke 21:36 as a support for pretrib.)

Cameron's July installment focused on doctrine and not history.

It was during the hot month of August, 1902, that Cameron began shooting his pretrib origin "fireworks":

"The first mention of this view, so far as I can ascertain, *during the whole period of Christian history*, was in the church of Edward Irving, in London, in the latter part of 1831 and the early part of 1832." As Kelly had done, Cameron then quoted a secondary source, Robert Baxter's book, especially what Baxter had written in 1833 about Irving's "heresy." Then this statement: "Dr. Tregelles, B. W. Newton and others, say there is not a hint of this doctrine in any writing extant, from the days of Polycarp to the days of Irving."

Cameron ended this installment (p. 238) by asking his readers: "Do you not think you should halt and weigh well the propagation of these views, which were taught by lying spirits in Mr. Irving's church?" "Do you not think you should re-examine this question before appealing to *Scriptures which demons used* to convince Mr. Baxter, when he hesitated, to accept this rapture before the coming of the Lord and before the tribulation?" "Do you think it wise to exalt into 'a test of fellowship' a doctrine . . . supported by the testimony of demons. . . ?"

After discussing theological arguments in the September issue, Cameron's October issue briefly stated (p. 298): "John Nelson Darby followed Edward Irving in this novelty. . . ."

November, however, featured a considerable amount of historical discussion on Cameron's part:

Page 330: ". . . we adhere to our own statement that 'the imminency held by a small section of pre-millennialists was never taught before the Reformation.' By that imminency

we meant and mean a pretribulation imminency, an imminency that denies the passing of the churches through the tribulation, a very different kind of imminency from that held by the Thessalonians, and some others since. This is the Edward Irving imminency, coming before tribulation.”

Page 331: “Nowhere do our Lord or his apostles teach the Irving doctrine. . . .”

Page 334: “. . . the historic *mould* of prophetic truth, as made known in the Bible, and as taught by Christians and creeds in all ages, has been: Apostacy, Anti-christ, Tribulation, Advent. The *first departure* from this mould, was taught in the church of Edward Irving, in London, England, by confessedly ‘lying spirits’ through men and women who became the channel, or medium of their utterances.”

He added: “it *never has been found in any Christian writings extant, before that day*. We therefore conclude that these ‘seducing spirits, speaking lies in hypocrisy [sic]’ were the authors of this *novel, unscriptural*, and misleading doctrine.”

And he wrote: “. . . no devout man of God ever believed or taught it before the days of Irving, and the fact that the ‘lying spirits’ introduced it stealthily at first, and boldly afterwards, should stamp it as a doctrine to be rejected by all God-fearing people, always and everywhere.”

The final (December) installment again centered on doctrinal arguments.

Some Observations

You can imagine how incensed the pretribs were upon hearing Cameron claim that their view had been taught by “lying spirits” and “demons” and (even worse) *authored* and *introduced* by such spirits!

Cameron’s main source was Robert Baxter’s 1833 book. Baxter wrote (p. 118) that because of “the successive failures of prophecy and contradictions of utterance . . . I was convinced it must be a work of Satan. . . .” He was also sure

that “we had all been speaking by a lying spirit, and not by the Spirit of the Lord.”

On page 135 Baxter wrote that “the whole work is a mimicry of the gifts of the Spirit. . . .” On pages 142-3, near the end of his book, Baxter spoke of “the continual use which was made of the doctrine of the second advent of our Lord. This was the leading theme of the utterances.” He added that “there must have been much error, in our view of the manner and circumstances of the coming of the Lord, or we could not have been so deceived.” Nowhere do I find Baxter arguing that the New Testament gifts of the Spirit are not for the church in modern times; he merely opposed the *imitation* and *abuse* of them and was disturbed that he and some others comprising the Irvingite illuminati had had non-pretrib-related prophecies that had fizzled prior to his 1833 book.

Cameron also quoted Tregelles’ 1864 book in which Tregelles said (p. 35) that he’d traced pretrib back to “an ‘utterance’ in Mr. Irving’s Church” in “about the year 1832” and that such doctrine “came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God. . . .” (Although Tregelles didn’t mention the Baxter work, his statement was similar to Baxter’s page 118 statement.)

My readers have undoubtedly observed the ease with which older writers threw caustic language (and even words like “Satan,” “demons,” and “lying spirits”) at their opponents. Since Cameron’s terminology in 1902 reflected Baxter’s in 1833, let’s review a bit of this 19th century “special effects” technique.

Baxter’s work seems to have been the first full-length denunciation of Irvingism. He’d been a non-charismatic posttrib, then temporarily a charismatic pretrib, and then had changed back to posttrib. He finally concluded that Irvingism was “a work of Satan.” But why such harsh language? Couldn’t he have used words like “error” or “wrong interpretation” instead of “Satan”? If there really had been direct and obvious Satanic or demonic influence, why didn’t insiders or

outsiders at least suggest the possibility of exorcisms?

If charismatic and prophetic abuse was of "Satan," it's odd how many 19th century teachers failed to see him behind the abuse of, and seemingly the total lack of, I Corinthians 13:13's "greatest" quality: charity!

Which brings me to John Darby, the master "special effects" man, and his verbal abuse in an undated work located between works dated 1850 and 1865.⁷

Darby spoke of "ignorance," "confusion," and "blindness" and said: "How entirely this system destroys spirituality and divine intelligence!" His vocabulary added "superficiality," "extreme levity," and "unmingled darkness." But he was only getting warmed up. He then said "unbelief and Satan," "absence of spiritual intelligence," "utter futility of its reasonings," "open blasphemy," "mass of unscriptural fancies and follies," "gross absurdities," "real blasphemies," and "blasphemies."

Was Darby applying these expressions to what he viewed as Irvingite aberrations? Or to persons openly hostile to God or the Bible? No. He was applying his phrases to a work defending the historic posttribulation rapture view!

With writers like Baxter and Darby as literary role models, perhaps we can see why Cameron chose the wording he employed.

The Time Element

Many later writers, who for a variety of motives have often quoted Baxter and Tregelles in regard to pretrib beginnings, have overlooked the most important consideration in this whole discussion — the time element. Baxter had been referring to events in Irving's church during 1831 and 1832. Cameron's historical discussion in August of 1902 said "the latter part of 1831 and the early part of 1832." And Tregelles

⁷J. N. Darby, "The Coming of the Lord and the Translation of the Church" (1850-65), Prop. No. 4, pp. 177-92.

stated “about the year 1832” — a very loose timeframe.

But Baxter, more than the other two, knew that pretrib hadn’t originated during those two years. His focus was on only later utterances and teaching *following* pretrib’s birth. He revealed (p. 141) that “the delusion first appeared in Scotland,” adding (p. 17) that pretrib had been “advanced” in “some of Mr. Irving’s writings” *after* the Scottish development. Baxter’s preface even mentioned *The Morning Watch* four times — the journal clearly teaching pretrib as early as September 1830.

Writers of different persuasions — including Norton, Kelly, Drummond, and Sandeen — agree that charismatic gifts weren’t exhibited in Irving’s London church before October of 1831.⁸

Since pretrib had been fully discussed and developed in *The Morning Watch* during the year preceding this date (as we’ve surveyed), and since no one to my knowledge has ever asserted that the earliest pretrib teaching in this journal stemmed from evil influences or manifestations, it’s wrong to conclude, as Cameron did, that pretrib sprang from evil, seducing spirits. Even Margaret didn’t display questionable practices until several months after her key revelation. It’s much safer for non-pretribs to apply “error” to the earliest development than “evil”!

Think of the intentional and unintentional origin revisionism that could have been avoided if Baxter had quoted the same Irvingite journal. Tregelles could have spoken with precision and included quotes from this valuable Irvingite source. Kelly might never have had his later cover-ups. And Cameron could also have spoken with clarity and avoided his needless antagonizing of opponents.

Well, Cameron’s unnecessary aggravation and inadvertent revisionism did nothing to soothe William Kelly’s nerves.

⁸Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles* etc., p. 48; William Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* (Feb., 1889), p. 220; A. L. Drummond, *Edward Irving* etc., p. 157; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, p. 26.

The Brethren leader and editor of Darby's writings was determined to respond in kind (but "kind" can't describe his forthcoming reaction). The following year, when we see Kelly pulling out all the stops, no one has to tell us that

The Plot Continues

In 1903 when in his eighties, Kelly used his old techniques and inflammatory speech in a final effort to wrest credit for pretrib away from the Irvingites. The result was his now well-known revisionist riposte entitled "The Rapture of the Saints: Who Suggested it, or Rather on what Scripture?"⁹

Kelly made it clear in this attack why his two-year series in 1889-1890 had majored on bad-mouthing and discrediting the Irvingites. He knew that he had to first sweep away all claims for them if his old friend Darby was to forever receive accolades for a certain end-time outlook.

Credit for Darby was the ultimate aim of Kelly's 1903 article. But apparently Kelly's earlier series hadn't convinced everyone that the Irvingites had finally been eliminated from competition. In his latest outburst he used 93 lines to debunk the Irvingites and only 47 lines to dignify Darby! And, as in his previous series, he liberally inserted his own prophetic interpretations.

Here's how his counterattack began:

When a bitter adversary of the Christian's heavenly hope sought many years ago to stigmatise it as having a foul and even Satanic origin, there were questions, in which he was compromised, too serious for any who weighed their import to notice so unworthy an insinuation. It is much to be doubted that the late Mr. J. N. Darby saw or heard of it; nor did I ever meet with it till lately, long after its dispersion far and wide. A recent American journal brought it first under my notice; but the idea was probably derived, directly or indirectly, from that source.

The "bitter adversary" was eminent Brethren scholar

⁹William Kelly, "The Rapture of the Saints" etc., *The Bible Treasury*, Vol. 4 (1903), pp. 314-18.

S. P. Tregelles. Kelly quoted Tregelles' 1864 statement regarding the pretrib origin, referred to his "polemic," and described Tregelles as "hostile," "the slanderer of J. N. D.," and "assailant."

Having prejudiced his readers against the Irvingites and anyone calmly crediting them, and having accused Tregelles of slandering Darby (when in fact the Tregelles statement hadn't even mentioned Darby), Kelly then quoted for support two later Darby memories that we've analyzed previously.

The first, Darby's memory dated 1835-1838, brought up only Isaiah 32 and changes during a future millennium and said nothing about a rapture.

The second, Darby's 1850 memory, merely stated that he came to "understand" an indeterminate-gap prior rapture in 1830 — a rapture that not even Darby had described as a pretrib rapture.

In the next paragraph Kelly wrote: "Now it so happens that, during a visit to Plymouth in the summer of 1845, Mr. B. W. Newton told me that, many years before, Mr. Darby wrote to him a letter in which he said that a suggestion was made to him by Mr. T. Tweedy (a spiritual man and most devoted ex-clergyman among the Irish brethren), which to his mind quite cleared up the difficulty previously felt on this very question."

The key word in the above is "suggestion." Thomas Tweedy, according to Huebner¹⁰, suggested to Darby that II Thessalonians 2:1 ("the coming" and "our gathering") teaches two "stages," which reportedly made Darby understand, in 1830, "the rapture" sometime before "the day of the Lord," as his 1850 memory claims — even though this verse mentions "the coming" ("the day of the Lord") *before* "our gathering" ("the rapture"), and even though Darby's rapture-before-the-day wording in this memory incredibly resembled the indeterminate gap expressed by T. W. C. in *The Morning Watch* in September 1830!

¹⁰R. Á. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 74.

Kelly's point was that Tweedy was the one who suggested the above verse. Indeed, Darby's 1850 memory immediately followed his 1850 interpretation of this Scripture portion which also included his quotation of II Thessalonians 2:3, the verse saying that both the apostasy and the man of sin must precede the day of the Lord. Darby's interpretation of verse 3 followed:

"That is, the apostle gives two reasons why they should not believe that the day of the Lord was come: first, the rapture of the saints is not yet; and secondly, the object of the judgment is not revealed."¹¹

If Darby in 1850 was advanced enough to substitute "rapture" for "falling away" and "judgment" for "man of sin," why should anyone question his understanding of a prior rapture in 1830? Kelly certainly didn't.

Kelly's account of his Plymouth visit also mentioned Darby's letter to Newton. Harold Rowdon, with the *Fry Manuscript* as his source, says that this letter was written in either 1832 or 1833.¹²

Putting it all together, Kelly (in 1903) demonstrated his Darby-crediting ability by recalling his visit with Darby's opponent Newton (in 1845) who recalled a Darby letter (in 1832 or 1833) which recalled a Tweedy suggestion (no date) which resulted in Darby understanding (not teaching) a small-gap (not pretrib) rapture — nondocumentation designed to endlessly link Darby's name with pretrib!

Right after his Plymouth visit "window dressing," Kelly lined up fellow Irishmen Tweedy and Darby against the Irvingites: "No one was farther from lending an ear to the impious and profane voices of the quasi-inspired Irvingites than Mr. T., unless indeed it were J. N. D. himself who had closely investigated their pretensions and judged their peculiar heterodoxy on Christ's humanity as anti-christian and blasphemous."

¹¹J. N. Darby, "Short but serious Examination" etc. (1850), Prop. No. 4, p. 67.

¹²Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, p. 97.

Getting past his caustic language, note that Darby “closely investigated.” We’ve also seen Darby closely investigating the Macdonalds and in his published account including every major detail that Cardale included in *The Morning Watch* except the *pretrib* detail!

Going further in some respects than even Baxter, Darby, and Tregelles had gone, Kelly got sidetracked over Irvingite aberrations — as if such doctrinal departures were proof that the Irvingites couldn’t have taught *pretrib*, or proof that Darby couldn’t have been influenced by the same Irvingites.

Kelly wanted his readers to infer that clear *pretrib* teaching couldn’t exist in a group noted for notoriety. Would anyone today claim that Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart never believed in *pretrib* simply because their careers included notorious elements?

Kelly claimed that the Irvingites operated by the power of a “demon,” tied this in with “tongues and miracles,” adding that their “apostles and prophets . . . shuffled and prevaricated in the way habitual among men under demon powers.”

After again saying that the Irvingites were influenced by a “seducing spirit,” Kelly devoted several paragraphs to non-*pretrib*-related “heresy” he claimed Newton taught. One minute he leaned on Newton for support when he wanted to elevate Darby, the next minute Newton wasn’t credible! And Tregelles’ *pretrib* origin statement — described by Kelly as “so vile an effort of polemical rancour” — also wasn’t believable because, as Kelly added, Tregelles was a *friend* of the Newton who reportedly taught “heresy”!

In all of this confusion, bad-mouthing, and sidetracking, Kelly hadn’t yet established even one fact relative to the *pretrib* origin. He circled the earth and touched every base except the *pretrib* one!

Again, while leaning on earlier writing which for one reason or another focused only on later reiteration (and not origination) of *pretrib*, Kelly asked: “But can any fair mind in God’s presence, if he knew no other facts, conceive a great

improbability than J. N. D. adopting the utterance of what he believed a demon as a truth of God?"

Following this, Kelly at last got around to Irvingism's prophetic teachings. But he didn't quote *The Morning Watch* or any of Irving's words. Instead, he summarized Baxter's fizzled rapture prediction by saying that Baxter believed that "within three years and a half, the saints would be caught up to the Lord, and the earth wholly given up to the days of vengeance."

Kelly failed to reveal that Baxter, as we've witnessed, equated "the days of vengeance" with the reign of "the personal man of sin" — another cover-up of pretrib in Irvingism.

Kelly then hinted that Irvingism expected a rapture somewhere in the middle of the book of Revelation. He said that this was "baseless" because the rapture "takes place between Rev. 3 and 4." Kelly said that this *blank space* position, which he himself held, "has nothing in common with the Irvingite voice in its unfounded and false application to the prophetic part of the Apocalypse."

Again Kelly covered up the fact that Darby, for decades, had the same "unfounded and false application." We've seen that between the late 1830's and the late 1860's Darby grounded his pretrib rapture on Revelation 12's "man child" — a position taught by Irving eight years before Darby began teaching it!

One Final Punch

It's obvious that Samuel P. Tregelles' 1864 statement, more than anything else, had triggered Kelly's final counter-attack in 1903, 28 years after Tregelles' death.

And Tregelles was partly at fault. Although he didn't explicitly declare that pretrib originated in an utterance in Irving's church, his statement that he hadn't been aware of the existence of pretrib until such an utterance could easily have led his readers to assume that pretrib had come from the same utterance.

Kelly naturally wanted to counter Tregelles' undocumented opinion that the utterance in question (which Tregelles tied to pretrib teaching) had come "from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God." At least Tregelles had been more scholarly and cautious than Baxter who had used terms like "work of Satan," "lying spirit," and so on.

But Kelly, while opposing Tregelles, couldn't very well admit that Tregelles had mistakenly focused on a later period and that *The Morning Watch* had clearly taught pretrib at least a year before the Irving church manifestations. If Kelly were to admit what he'd known all along, that this Irvingite journal had publicly taught the new prophetic view as early as September 1830, how could he continue to put his departed friend Darby on a pretrib pedestal?

The fact that Kelly's first sentence referred to Tregelles as "a bitter adversary" showed that he couldn't get Tregelles out of his mind. Following this, Kelly then quoted the Tregelles statement. That this opinion had been issued by the greatest Brethren scholar of the 19th century, and not someone outside Kelly's circle, was to Kelly like salt rubbed into a wound!

Several pages into his attack, Kelly repeated this portion of what Tregelles had written: "it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose."

When Kelly had read what Tregelles had described as "modern," he knew he had to challenge Tregelles. Otherwise scholars would continue to believe what Kelly wanted to deny: that the pretrib view itself was nothing more than a modern, Johnny-come-lately notion.

Kelly, brilliant controversialist and cunning debater that he was, knew he couldn't successfully launch a direct attack on Tregelles' "modern doctrine" expression. After all, Darby himself had admitted in an 1834 letter,¹³ when discussing the four-

¹³J. N. Darby, *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 26.

year-old pretrib view, that “the thoughts are new”!

Kelly knew it would be foolhardy, if not impossible, to try to read pretrib into lengthy, detailed discussions of the second coming published before 1830. And yet he somehow had to precede — and therefore discredit — the well-known Irvingite contribution of 1830.

So, for the climax of his assault, he decided to concentrate on Tregelles’ “modern phraseology” expression, knowing it would be far easier to manipulate a *single word* of the past than ancient and wordy theological treatises. He began:

Ah, yes; but the “modern phraseology” — that tells the tale! Is it then that “the rapture” betrays the tainted source beyond a doubt? What a blinding preoccupation must have possessed the mind which drew such an inference! It is true that in the Dictionary of Dr. S. Johnson, and even in that of the much lauded Richardson, “rapture” is wholly absent in the sense before us. Webster, and Worcester also ignore it. It is an inexcusable blank. For it is *not* a modern “phraseology”, but employed as in this case two or three centuries ago by well known authors of choice expression.

Support was then forthcoming: Shakespeare (1564-1616), with “actual removal out of the present scene by power” in mind, wrote about “the rapture of the sea.” Bishop Joseph Hall (Hall’s *Works*, 1837) called Elijah’s translation “The Rapture of Elijah.” In 1673 Dr. Thomas Jackson said that both Enoch and Elijah experienced a “rapture.” The *Whole Works* (1828) of Bishop Jeremy Taylor applied “rapture” to the Apostle Paul’s mystical experience. Matthew Henry used this word. And so did Dr. John Guyse in 1796 when paraphrasing I Thessalonians 4:17.

Kelly, however, was being deliberately evasive with his historical argument and using a “straw man” tactic. Nowhere in his 1864 book did Tregelles say the word “rapture” was a *modern* term! What Kelly was subtly trying to convey, in addition to crediting Darby with “recovering” pretrib, was that pretrib was believed before 1830 simply because the word “rapture” was used!

“X-raying” Tregelles

Samuel Tregelles lived from 1813 to 1875. His adult life coincided with pretrib rapture development. He well knew that the only *modern* phrases were those that had been bonded to “rapture” — phrases like “secret,” “any-moment,” and “pretrib.”

For more than a century, prophecy writers on different sides of the rapture issue have often reproduced Tregelles’ well-known 1864 quote which focused on “a *secret* rapture of the church at a secret coming.” Since none of them, to my knowledge, had ever attempted to explain what he meant by “modern phraseology,” I took the time to analyze his 120-page book.

Tregelles often used the word “rapture” (which wasn’t modern). But he always tied it in with expressions familiar to pretribs such as “secret” or “any moment”. Presto: modern lingo!

Here are his expressions denoting secrecy (and the number of times he used them): “secret coming” (29), “secret rapture” (25), “secret removal” (8), “secret advent” (13), “secret raised” (1), “secret transaction” (1), “secret theory” (1), “secret doctrine” (2), “secret translation” (1). He also used “private coming” (1), “private removal” (1), “private taking” (1).

He used “any moment” two times and the “Jewish” interpretation (distinctively pretrib) 25 times.

He also said that some pretribs, while applying “second coming” to a pretrib rapture, were applying “third coming” to the final advent.

He added that some had been viewing the pretrib rapture as “the FIRST-first resurrection” and the final advent as “the SECOND-first resurrection.”

So we see that famed scholar Tregelles was *not* claiming that the word “rapture” was a modern expression of his day, and I couldn’t let another century go by without exposing Kelly’s unconscionable trickiness.

Three years later William Kelly died on March 27, 1906. But his spirit has remained alive and well in "approved" books such as Pickering's *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, published in Britain as early as 1918. While going through the 1986 reprint, I noticed three glaring omissions:

1. While it contains many sketches of well-known (and also some hardly known) Brethren of the past, I found no sketches of either Newton or Tregelles, two of the most famous Brethren. But both were also *vocal* posttribs!

2. The sketch of William Kelly includes these four words that eminent British preacher Charles H. Spurgeon once applied to Kelly: "born for the universe. . . ." F. Roy Coad, a British Brethren member, reveals in his Brethrenism history that "but narrowed by Darbyism" is the rest of the Spurgeon quote that the Pickering work omits!¹⁴

3. The same sketch of Kelly also claims that he "vindicates" the originality of Darby in connection with the pretribulation rapture.¹⁵ This sketch, however, has nothing to say about the *methods* associated with this so-called vindication!

Maybe some of my readers will contact Pickering's publisher and suggest an appropriate word that can be added just before "vindicates."

¹⁴F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, p. 210.

¹⁵E. E. W., "William Kelly," *Chief Men Among the Brethren* Hy. Pickering, editor (Loizeaux Brothers, 1986), p. 106.

VIII

AFTEREFFECTS

The British Brethren leader who successfully engineered the pretribulation rapture origin revisionism between 1889 and 1903 that we've just observed made a huge mistake: he drew attention to what he described as Irvingism's "one joint organ" and "accredited organ" — *The Morning Watch*.

The same leader, William Kelly, even quoted eight non-pretrib-related paragraphs of this Irvingite journal, paragraphs that he embodied in the July 1889 installment of his lengthy anti-Irvingism series in *The Bible Treasury*.

Since Kelly obviously was determined to discredit the Irvingites, and in practice repeatedly covered up their clear pretrib (which was also pre-Darby) teaching, why on earth did he even *mention* this Irvingite publication?

Surely he must have known that sooner or later — even if it took a century — someone could compare this journal's earliest teaching with Darby's earliest teaching and repudiate the title he wanted to confer upon Darby.

It's mind-boggling to realize that the comparison of the earliest Irvingism with the earliest Darbyism that's featured in the present book could have been published long before now. As early as the 1860's Kelly was assembling what is known as Darby's *Collected Writings*. And by the late 1880's he had access to *The Morning Watch* and was publicly quoting it.

So by the 1890's, or at least during the earliest years of

the present century, someone (Benjamin Newton? Robert Cameron? William Erdman?) could have aired the above comparison and nipped Kelly's rose-colored revisionism in the bud. (As long as leading scholars had known the true facts about pretrib beginnings, this relatively new end-time theory had been confined to a tiny fraction of all evangelicals — a handful of Darby disciples on both sides of the Atlantic.)

Kelly was optimistic enough to believe that the pretribism in Irvingism (that had clearly preceded the pretribism in Darbyism) would never again rise up out of the grave he had dug for it and haunt anyone. Hadn't even Scofield publicly discredited the Irvingites and Gaebelin published Scofield's statement? And, anyway, how many American writers had the same access then to *The Morning Watch* that Kelly had?

And Scofield had the same optimism. By publicly acknowledging at least Darby's theological heirs (if not Darby himself), he was quietly perpetuating Darbyism's official (per)version of its own roots and effectively squashing all claims for Irvingism.

In the 1909 introduction to his Bible which featured (historically discordant) notes, Scofield mentioned truly eminent professors such as Barrelet, Sayce, and Margoliouth of Europe, and C. R. Erdman of America, but didn't call any of them "eminent." By comparison he listed "Mr. Walter Scott, the eminent Bible teacher" who, revealingly, authored *John Nelson Darby* (a memorial).

With the financial backing of some of Gaebelin's biggest contributors (patrons who generously helped to meet Scofield's expenses during the assembling of his reference Bible), with the prestige of Oxford University Press as his publisher (a publisher that helped pave the way for the commercialization of pretribism), and with ancient texts embroidered with a modern theory in his Book's margins (a theory that had recently had its own roots embroidered), Scofield was confident that his readers would be so taken up with the

heavenly rapture, few would realize how earthly and recent its basis and birth had been.

20th Century Works

Soon we'll note the revival in the 1970's of Kelly's pretrib origin revisionism. But for the time being let's examine some influential 20th century works, preceding this later revival, that also discussed the formulation and chief figures of this view. Keep in mind that during this period dispensationalists uniformly credited Darby while non-dispensationalists — whose ability for deeper historical research was no match for dispensationalism's advertising and mass-marketing ability — generally named Irving or someone identified with him.

A year after the 1917 edition of Scofield's Bible, E. P. Cachemaille's *The Prophetic Outlook To-day* was published in Britain. Under the subtitle "Origin of the 'Secret Rapture' Theory," Cachemaille quoted S. P. Tregelles' 1864 origin statement and discussed Robert Baxter's role during the 1831-1832 manifestations in Irving's London church, adding:

Prior to the fanatical outbreak in Mr. Irving's church, and before the Plymouth revival, Mr. Irving had publicly taught on the subject what was adopted by Mr. Robert Baxter. . . . Such was the birthplace and such the origin of this idea. Set in impiety, the doctrine of the Lord's secret Coming, before the manifestation of the Man of Sin and before the Great Tribulation, was then first openly promulgated in England. It was adopted by the late J. N. Darby, and was caught up far and near, and hailed as enchanted teaching. There has since been much scheming to give the doctrine a reputable origin, scheming by those who did not know the original facts, not being contemporaries of Dr. Tregelles.¹

But Cachemaille was wrong when he said that schemers hadn't known the "original facts." The biggest schemer of all, the William Kelly who was indeed one of Tregelles'

¹E. P. Cachemaille, *The Prophetic Outlook To-day* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1918), pp. 19-20.

contemporaries, knew that the greatest collection of original facts (displaying the earliest public pretrib teaching) was in *The Morning Watch*.

No self-respecting dispensationalist of the late 1800's would have even attempted a two-year series on the Irvingites if he hadn't been thoroughly conversant with their most important documents. Kelly's interest in and emphasis on Irving's "heresy," as was shown in our quotation (see above, p. 157) of his February 1889 installment, indicates his unrelenting search through all of this journal's issue for this topic. The March 1833 issue, from which he took his eight quoted paragraphs, contained numerous specimens of clear pretrib teaching, the best of which were included in our Irving chapter. In fact, one of the specimens appeared just *several pages after* the article he quoted!

Even Margaret hadn't been forgotten. In 1921 Alexander Mackie, with William Hanna's *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (1877) as his source, wrote that "Margaret Macdonald died not long after what has been believed to have been her miraculous restoration to health."²

During the following year, the aged Robert Cameron was still pointing to Irvingism: "On the authority of the late Dr. S. P. Tregelles, whom the learned Rendel Harris has called 'the greatest Biblical Scholar of the Nineteenth Century,' no mention is found in any Christian literature extant, from the first century until A.D. 1830, making mention of these modern teachings. All the 'great Teachers,' *all* 'the most spiritually minded,' and the whole body of Christians, *prior* to the days of Edward Irving, were a unit in believing that the Church would not escape the Tribulation."³

In 1936 Brethren member Napoleon Noel stated: "God raised up Mr. Darby specially to lead in the work and process of Crystallization, as the fact that he was first and foremost in

²Alexander Mackie, *The Gift of Tongues* (Doran, 1921), p. 164.

³Robert Cameron, *Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return* (Revell, 1922), pp. 138-9.

teaching the truths of the 'One Body,' and of the Headship of Christ, and of the Rapture, as well as his numerous writings, proves."⁴

The next year Alexander Reese, the subtitle of whose book was *An Examination of the Teaching of J. N. Darby and his Followers*, wrote: "Yet the undeniable fact is that this 'any-moment' view of Christ's Return only originated about 1830, when Darby gave forth at the same time the mistaken theory of the Secret Coming and Rapture. . . ."⁵

Even though Reese, as staunch a posttrib as Cameron, cited (p. 281) the page in Cameron's 1922 book *following* the above quote (following Cameron's crediting of Irvingism), Reese nevertheless assumed that Darby was first. If Cameron had quoted *The Morning Watch* and compared it with Darby's earliest words, instead of relying on secondary sources, Reese probably would have been persuaded to credit the Irvingites. Reese's assumption about Darby undoubtedly encouraged some later posttribs — not to mention already convinced pretribs — to continue crediting Darby with the pretrib view.

In 1942 noted pretrib teacher H. A. Ironside, who had had a Brethren background, asserted that pretrib was "brought to light" at the Irish (Powerscourt) prophetic conferences which began in 1831. He said it was wrong to conclude that there had been links between early Brethren and early Irvingites because what the Brethren then taught was "so contrary" to what the Irvingites had been teaching!⁶

Ironside also produced an undated, 48-page booklet. Part of it was strikingly similar to William Kelly's 1903 outburst. (Kelly had said "stigmatise . . . as . . . Satanic"; Ironside referred to the "stigma of demonism.") Ironside's statement: "Others again have tried to put the stigma of demonism

⁴Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren* (W. F. Knapp, 1936), p. 55.

⁵Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, n.d. [1937]), p. 227.

⁶H. A. Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1942), p. 23.

upon the precious truth that the Lord may return at any time to take His saints to be with Himself preceding the great tribulation, endeavoring to link this with certain theories taught by the late Edward Irving and his followers in the early part of the nineteenth century. But any one at all acquainted with Irving's actual teaching can see how truly false this is."⁷

In 1952 leading posttrib defender George Ladd confessed that he hadn't been able to obtain any sources pinpointing the beginnings of dispensationalism.⁸

In a 1956 book, Ladd quoted the 1864 Tregelles statement crediting Irvingism and added that pretrib was promoted and popularized by Darby and Kelly.⁹

In 1957 John Walvoord, the leading pretrib defender of our time, referred to Darby as one of the *older* pretribs, evidently unaware that the Irvingites were even older (as pretrib teachers) than Darby.¹⁰

In a 1960 in-depth look at dispensationalism's development, Clarence Bass wrote that it's open to question whether Darby originated pretrib, adding that it's more probable that the Irvingites originated it. Bass, however, stopped short of traveling back down the older Irvingite road — the only one appearing on the earliest 19th century "road atlases."¹¹

In 1962 posttrib defender J. Barton Payne traced pretrib back to an utterance by a woman in Irving's circle of friends.¹²

We've already noted the works by Harold Rowdon (1967)

⁷H. A. Ironside, *Not Wrath, But Rapture* etc. (Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.), pp. 43-4.

⁸George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), p. 49, footnote.

⁹George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 40-1.

¹⁰John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Dunham Publishing Co., 1957), p. 160.

¹¹Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 146.

¹²J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 32.

and Ernest Sandeen (1970), both crediting Darby but neither comprehensively comparing Darby's earliest writings with Irvingism's earliest development.

The foregoing summary of influential prophecy books, though hardly all-inclusive, is given to show that during this century pretribs (emphasizing Darby) have regularly disagreed with non-pretribs (who've often credited someone in Irving's domain).

This 20th century disagreement has come about largely because writers on each side have relied on *secondary sources focusing on later manifestations in Irving's church that followed Margaret's and The Morning Watch's earlier development.*

Prior to the present book, I knew of only two writers who had been thoroughly familiar with the earliest writings of both Irvingism and Brethrenism who had also given the impression that their published comparisons of these writings were as nonselective and fair as they were scholarly and comprehensive.

William Kelly was the first writer. And R. A. Huebner is the second one. But not until I discovered, with Huebner's "help," the existence of Kelly's plot did I realize that Huebner has merely imitated Kelly's techniques. Let's now compare Huebner with Kelly.

Chief Critic Visited

R. A. Huebner's no-copyright-notice, no-price-given, 1973 work of 81 pages normally would have appealed to only a limited number of his fellow (Darbyist) Brethren friends.¹³

But it was soon viewed as an expedient rebuttal of newly uncovered facts about pretribism's long cover-up of its own roots. That Walvoord and Ryrie saw it as a crisis stopgap, quoted it for support, and stimulated some others to do the same are reasons enough to analyze aspects of this Huebner work.

¹³R. A. Huebner, *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (Present Truth Publishers, 1973).

Huebner's introduction reveals his plan: he will discredit Irvingism and then, having cleared the ground, will credit Darby with the pretrib view.¹⁴ (Kelly attempted to discredit the Irvingites in 1889-90 before he attempted to credit Darby in 1903.)

On the following page, while discussing the Ante-Nicene fathers, Huebner says that they "expected Christ to come," "expected Antichrist to appear before Christ's appearing," and "expected to pass through the tribulation," adding: "Though they spoke in expectant terms, Antichrist and tribulation, in their view, had to occur first."¹⁵

Here he shows that expectancy doesn't require belief in either imminence or pretrib. But he has a double standard. In our chapter on Darby's early works, we took note that throughout more than 50 pages of his 1991 work while resting on the same evidence, Huebner subtly changes Darby's "daily expectation" (which involved *intermediate* events) to "immediate coming" (soon but not necessarily imminent) to belief that "the Lord might come at any time"!

When Huebner sets out to bar the Irvingites from competition, several of Kelly's techniques come into play. One of them is repetition. While authors can use a bit of this to emphasize a conclusion, Huebner's excessive usage even before he offers evidence amounts to brainwashing — a psyching up of his readers. He combines this technique with caustic terms and "straw man" argumentation.

I'll explain. In order to discredit non-dispensationalist assessments of the pretrib origin, Huebner asserts that some of them have claimed that Darby got his pretrib teaching from a *demonic* source. Knowing that the repetition of this so-called claim will anger his Darby-honoring readers and cause them to accept his origin version, Huebner repeats it 27 times on his first 18 pages — before he begins analyzing Irvingism's most important primary document, *The Morning Watch*.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 2.

Huebner quotes several writers who supposedly made this “demonic” charge — including even William Kelly! (Huebner’s revisionist interpretation follows within parentheses.)

1. In 1864 S. P. Tregelles wrote: “It came . . . from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God.” (Huebner: “In 1864, he said it came from a demon.”)¹⁶

2. In 1903 William Kelly referred to the Irvingite “oracles.” (Huebner: Kelly was talking about “Irvingite demon-inspired utterances.”)¹⁷

3. In 1956 H. A. Baker said that pretrib came from a “spirit.” (Huebner: Baker said it came from a “demon.”)¹⁸

4. In 1957 Oswald J. Smith declared that pretrib came from “a vision received by a woman” in Irving’s church. (Huebner: Smith said it came from a “demon.”)¹⁹

5. In 1962 J. Barton Payne traced pretrib to “a woman . . . speaking in tongues.” (Huebner: Payne traced it to a “demon.”)²⁰

After quoting these five authors and giving his single-minded assessment of each quote, Huebner writes: “I don’t deny that there was demon activity among the Irvingites. I do affirm that the demonic utterances that related to prophecy concerned a post-tribulational coming.” Earlier Huebner had said that there was “demon possession” among the Irvingites and that they “held no pretribulational rapture.”²¹

Huebner thus broad-brushes Irvingites as demonic — and even *demon-possessed* — posttribs! We’ve seen Darby, in the mid-1800’s, applying “Satan” to the historic posttrib view; and Kelly, in 1903, applying “demon” to the Irvingites.

At first glance we can readily see that Huebner has grossly exaggerated the quotes he’s taken from these writers. Tregelles mentioned nothing more than pretense and

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 3, 16, 17.

lack of spirituality. Kelly spoke of human mouthpieces. Baker used “spirit” which can also mean *force* or *mood* (e.g., spirit of anger or deception). Smith used “vision” which can mean *revelation* or *interpretation*. (When Huebner, 1991, page 75, says “I now see. . .” and then admits a change on his part, he’s telling about a new “vision” of his!) Payne pretrib-credited a woman tongues-speaker. (Charismatics will be happy to learn that leading pretrib authority John Walvoord, when opposing my research, leans not on just a non-charismatic like Scofield but on a Huebner who’s so violently *anti*-charismatic he can easily, and glibly, and repeatedly equate charismatic gifts with Satanic *demonism*!)

Huebner also knows that the five authors he’s misrepresented were influenced, directly or indirectly, by ex-Irvingite Robert Baxter. While Baxter spoke of a “lying spirit,” as we’ve seen, neither he nor other Irvingite insiders nor outside observers performed any exorcisms or even suggested the need for them. Baxter didn’t argue, as Huebner does, that spiritual gifts are not for present-day Christians; his bitterness, reflected in the blunt language he used, stemmed from predictions which fizzled. The fizzles, he was sure, were caused by the *abuse* of such gifts.

Huebner can quickly attach “demon” and even “demon-possessed” to the Irvingites who made false predictions. Baxter predicted in 1832 that a pretrib rapture would happen on July 14, 1835 — what Huebner labels as Baxter’s “demon-inspired prophecy.”²²

For the sake of consistency, has Huebner ever applied his Darby- and Kelly-inspired variations of “demon” to recently discredited date-setters including Edgar (1988 Rapture) Whisenant? Will he apply them to Harold Camping after the 1994 fiasco?

Up to this point we’ve seen how Huebner gets his non-charismatic and pretrib (and conceivably non-demon-pos-

²²*Ibid.*, p. 23.

sessed) readers in the mood to accept his discrediting of Irvingism so that he can eventually credit Darby with pretrib. He connects “demon” with tongues-speaking (misrepresents Baxter), “demonic” with posttrib (were all pre-1830 teachers “demonic?”), and misrepresents his five authors (none of whom said “demon” etc. in the quotes offered).

But here’s the most important fact relative to Huebner’s psyching-up methods: the time period. He knows that the five he quotes were focusing only on *later* manifestations in Irving’s church, and that four of them — Tregelles, Baker, Smith, and Payne — were seemingly unaware that pretrib had appeared more than a year earlier in Irvingism’s most valuable primary document, *The Morning Watch*.

Right after his preparatory “mood music,” Huebner has a chapter on “Development of the Irvingites’ Prophetical Views: 1826-1834” and extensively quotes this important Irvingite journal.

This in itself shows that Huebner knew all along that the later manifestations had nothing to do with the earlier origination and development. His inclusion of quotes dealing with later events is merely his excuse to embellish them with “demon” etc. and thus bias the minds of his readers. When he gets around to analyzing *The Morning Watch*, who will even dare to think, after such psyching up, that pretrib could have been taught by “demon-possessed, posttrib” Irvingites?

One more thing. Huebner knows that one of the five quoted — William Kelly — also knew that pretrib originated before the later manifestations and that *The Morning Watch* development also preceded them. Which is why Kelly, in his 1889-90 series, acknowledged its existence and called it the “accredited organ” even though he quoted nothing of substance and covered up all of its clear pretrib teaching.

If Huebner can direct the abrasive language toward opponents that Darby and Kelly directed toward their own opponents; if he can psych up readers the way Kelly did; if he

can erect “straw men” and see non-existent “demons” in the same way that Kelly read “rapture” in Tregelles’ “modern phraseology”; if he can read Darby’s later memories into Darby’s earliest words the way Darby and Kelly and others have done; and if he can change a daily expectation of a posttrib advent into an any-moment pretrib rapture and “mature” Darby the way Kelly did with footnotes and bracketed insertions, then will we be surprised if he also (1) selectively quotes *The Morning Watch* and (2) by-passes its clear pretrib teaching the way Kelly did?

Huebner’s Primary Department

Huebner begins his chapter on Irvingism’s prophetic views with a foundational misconception. In the first sentence he speaks of the “rise of an idea about ‘firstfruits’ amongst Irvingites . . . years after the dissemination of the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture. . . .”²³

But this isn’t so. The “firstfruits” concept appeared before the pretrib concept. While Huebner’s 1973 book doesn’t find any pretrib teaching or even “understanding” of it before 1830, in the chapter on Margaret we noted that throughout 1829 *The Morning Watch* reiterated Irvingism’s “firstfruits” idea. In September John Tudor wrote that most of the “elect ones” will be “gathered” at “the Feast of Tabernacles” (the start of the “Millennial kingdom”) while the “firstfruits” of the elect are “removed at an earlier period than the Feast of Tabernacles.”²⁴

By 1991 Huebner claims that pretrib was taught even earlier — in 1827. But the same Irvingite idea precedes even this date. A work by Irving in 1826, which was originally an 1825 sermon he preached, declared that the “first-fruits” are “gathered before the harvest which immediately

²³*Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁴John Tudor, “On the Structure of the Apocalypse” (*The Morning Watch*, Sep., 1829), p. 308.

precedeth the treading of the wine-press of wrath."²⁵

Let's now analyze Huebner's analysis of *The Morning Watch*, keeping in mind that at the end of his chapter he flatly states that "Irvingism through 1833 shows not an atom of the any-moment, pretribulation rapture."²⁶

He can conclude this because he's aware that when new doctrine invades a group, some may instantly accept it, some may accept it later on, and some may never accept it. Since we know that his aim is to credit Darby, will we be disappointed if we find Huebner selectively quoting only those who had no gap or only a tiny (and not a pretrib) gap or, even worse, find him by-passing clear pretrib teaching in those who had a fully developed gap?

Huebner first analyzes the article in the September 1830 issue by T. W. C. (which repeatedly flows out of his pen as "T. C. W.") and correctly concludes that this writer taught only a tiny gap between stages.²⁷

But he omits the "Fidus" article in the *same issue* that saw "Philadelphia" caught up before "the great tribulation," which we've previously dissected.

After overlooking three clearly pretrib articles in the June 1831 issue (including Irving's pace-setting "man child" thesis which, during later decades, became Darby's pretrib basis), Huebner quotes an unimportant sentence on page 253 in the December 1831 issue.²⁸

He stops short of the *next paragraph* which said that we can't be properly looking for "the coming of the Lord . . . when we interpose any screen whatever; when we look for any event of persecution or tribulation, . . . any manifestation

²⁵Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God* (Glasgow: Chalmers and Collins, 1826), p. 581. See also Irving's references to "first fruits" in his preliminary discourse in the Lacunza work, pp. lxxxiii, cxix, cxlvii (1826 section).

²⁶R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, p. 26.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 22.

of Antichrist.” (The imminent pretribism here is surpassed by only the pretrib imminence!)

Huebner then quotes another article in the same December issue which announced: “We have, blessed be God, lived to see *the commencement of the seventh vial*, DURING THE OUTPOURING OF WHICH THE LORD WILL COME!”²⁹

After Walvoord (1976, p. 45; 1979, pp. 153-4) quoted this announcement and Ryrie (1981, pp. 69-70) summarized it, neither saw pretrib in it. And both were correct.

But both were apparently unaware that Huebner’s “selective service” halts this quotation of Irvingite John Hooper just *two pages short of* pretrib teaching. After tying “our gathering together unto him” with I Thessalonians 4:17, Hooper spoke of “those things which shall occur after God’s waiting people are gathered unto him, when that determined to be poured upon the Jews shall be accomplished. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, &c.”

Question: how could Hooper see a future Matthew 24 tribulation — and a rapture before it — if the seventh vial of Revelation 16:17 had already started? Simple arithmetic: as a historicist who saw the final advent in about 1868,³⁰ Hooper had 37 remaining years he could fit in between Revelation 16 and Revelation 19 — more than enough time for such future events.

Before and after his quotation of this journal, Huebner points out that this group held to the historicist “year-day theory.” By emphasizing this and omitting Hooper’s pretrib rapture, Huebner is able to conclude that this article “contained no pretribulation rapture.”³¹

After merely mentioning that a September 1832 article taught the year-day theory (his readers will keep deducing

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁰John Hooper, *The Doctrine of the Second Advent* (London: James Nisbet, 1829), pp. 34-5.

³¹R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, pp. 19, 23, 26.

that Irvingism was posttrib), Huebner quotes a March 1833 piece which told about “signs . . . immediately after the tribulation.”³²

But Huebner fails to disclose that *two pages earlier* the same writer commented that when “the saints are gathered and translated . . . Satan will then have been cast to the earth” — the Revelation 12 “man child”-based pretrib rapture that we’ve seen Darby promoting during the 1850’s and 1860’s!

In the next paragraph he claims that Robert Baxter taught a rapture “before the ‘days of vengeance’ (i.e., the pouring out of the seven vials). . . .”³³

We’ve seen, however, that Baxter equated the “days of vengeance” with the future reign of a “personal man of sin” (Baxter was teaching pretrib) and not with “the seven vials.” And in our first chapter we noted that Huebner likewise misinterpreted “the great tribulation” in the “Fidus” pretrib scheme as “evidently the pouring out of the seventh vial.” (Whereas Kelly recognized Baxter’s belief in a future tribulation but omitted the rapture preceding it, Huebner recognizes Baxter’s rapture but omits the tribulation following it!)

Huebner then quotes Irving in *The Morning Watch* of June 1832. Irving wrote that the church will be “translated unto glory” before “Antichrist develops himself” and that “the church of the firstborn, the man child, being with Christ in the cloud of his glory” will “execute the seventh trumpet, by pouring out the seven vials and accomplishing the wrath of God. . . .”

Huebner omits the translation-before-Antichrist phrases, deletes the “man child” phrase — which takes us back to Irving seeing pretrib in this symbol in 1831 years before Darby adopted this — and concludes that this article was void of pretrib!³⁴

Huebner then has some final quotation of this journal

³²*Ibid.*, p. 24.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

and says it is found on page 253 in the September 1831 issue.³⁵ But it's actually found on page 252 of the December 1831 issue. Several paragraphs ago we saw him quoting page 253 of the same December issue. So *twice* he comes extremely close to the no-screen, imminent pretrib statement we included about a dozen paragraphs ago and avoids it both times!

Feeling confident that his Kelly-like cover-up of pretribism in Irvingism will remain undetected, Huebner then attempts to present Darby's earliest development.

And Kelly had the same pattern. In 1889-90 he majored on suppressing Irvingism's development. Only later (1903) did he focus on crediting Darby. And when he did, he was careful to psych up his readers with Darby's later memories dated 1835-38 and 1850.

At the same time Kelly was shrewd enough to detour around Darby's very earliest published words. His 1903 outburst by-passed Darby's 1827-30 works for these reasons: (1) his readers would have noted the discrepancy between Darby's later memories and Darby's earliest works which had a dearth of pretrib, and (2) scholars, drawn to Darby's earliest development, could have compared it with Irvingism's earliest development and concluded that the latter had been first to teach not only pretrib but even the underlying "thoughts" that supposedly led to it!

Before analyzing Darby's 1827-30 words, Huebner's 1973 book prefaces them with Darby's 1855 memory. And before he interprets Darby's 1834-39 progress, he mentally prepares readers with Darby reminiscences dated 1868, 1850, and 1863.³⁶ (In a previous chapter we've seen how he interprets Darby's early works.)

The rest of Huebner's 1973 production includes a chapter on Robert Baxter that covers up his pretrib teaching (as Kelly had done), a chapter on Kelly's 1903 outburst already

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 33-7, 44-5.

analyzed (see above, pp. 178-85), and a final chapter on Margaret also analyzed (see above, pp. 28-53). Failing to show any Darby "recovery," he shows only his own recovery of Kelly's earlier revisionism!

Ice's Perspectives

After John Walvoord (1976 and 1979) and Charles Ryrie (1981) echoed Huebner's 1973 origin revisionism which had echoed Kelly's earlier revisionism, Texas pastor Thomas Ice, who had studied at Dallas Seminary, decided he could echo just as well in his *Biblical Perspectives* publication. His series on the pretrib origin began in early 1989.³⁷

On two different pages Ice claims that I've been saying all along that Margaret Macdonald did *not* teach the pretrib view!³⁸ Well, pray tell, just *which* view have I been crediting her with all these years if not the *pretrib* view? If Ice is right, why have I constantly credited her with pretrib and even included "pretrib" in two of my book titles?

Ice's source for his bizarre statement is my book *The Great Rapture Hoax* (p. 121) where I said that Margaret "separated the Rapture from the Second Coming." Do these seven words rule out pretrib? Don't pretribs separate their rapture from the second coming? The same book of mine constantly credits Margaret with pretrib. And the back cover, which I composed, says that she "was the first one to teach a Rapture *before* the Tribulation"!

After wondering about Ice's qualifications to talk even informally about the origin, I then noted that after he includes Margaret's key revelation, he says that I have "found the pretrib Rapture" in her words! But in his next sentence³⁹ he states that I've admitted that what I've found in her words "is

³⁷Thomas D. Ice, "The Origin of the Pretrib Rapture," Part I (*Biblical Perspectives*, Jan./Feb., 1989).

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 2, 4.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 4.

not the pretrib Rapture"! Ice doesn't explain how I've found a pretrib rapture that isn't a pretrib rapture!

Early on, Ice says he will demonstrate that Darby himself admitted that he believed in pretrib by 1827. He offers these sources:

1. A letter Huebner sent to Ice on March 20, 1989 in which Huebner said that a book he was working on, set for publication in two years, would show that in 1827 Darby held to "the immediate coming." But Huebner said "immediate" coming and not "pretrib" coming!

2. Ernest Sandeen's 1970 guess, based on Darby's 1855 memory, that Darby held to pretrib in 1827. But Sandeen had stated earlier that the 1827 Darby was posttrib! This memory said nothing about a prior rapture!

3. John L. Bray's 1982 claim, based on an 1879 Darby memory, that Darby "plainly said" that in 1827 he was pretrib. But this memory didn't mention a prior rapture!⁴⁰

We've previously noted that Darby's later memories exaggerate what he actually wrote in 1827. Even Huebner can't find anything more significant than "heavenly" in Darby's 1827 paper!

After psyching up his readers with secondary sources that disagree on the origin's date (the 1820's? 1827? 1830 in connection with Tweedy? the 1830's?), Ice finally (and nervously like Kelly) reproduces Margaret's key revelation in his first installment. He has 15 errors — and no hits and no runs — when copying it. Four of these are distinctive errors found in Hal Lindsey's 1983 reproduction! Ice's 1989 reproduction also omits *48 words* (that alter the meaning) from Margaret's 117-line account! Tim LaHaye's 1992 reproduction in *No Fear of the Storm* features the same 48 missing words in the same places! LaHaye and Ice are presently working together as chairman and vice chairman, respectively, in connection with the recently orga-

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

nized Pre-Trib Research Center in Washington, DC.

The following year Thomas Ice was the one chosen to provide, for *Bib Sac*, a rebuttal to my research.⁴¹

Using Huebner's and Kelly's straw-man tactics, Ice says in this journal that I've been claiming that pretrib is of "demonic origin"!⁴² Ice and his pretrib predecessors have put so many words in my mouth it's sometimes hard for my own words to come out! But I'll try — again.

The demon-flavored "straw" that Ice, Walvoord, and some others have used to make "hay" is traceable to Huebner's 1973 book. Huebner included a 1971 paper of mine (which he viewed as my revelation of a "demonic source") which referred to "a Scottish lassie whose friends, according to A. L. Drummond's *Edward Irving and His Circle* (pp. 141, 142, 146, 238, 279), included those who practiced ecstatic speech, telepathy, and (shades of Satan) automatic writing!"⁴³

Note that I was talking about Margaret's *friends* and not Margaret and that my source was Drummond. Apparently Huebner sees only two extremes in individuals: they're either totally good or totally (or almost) demon-possessed. Does he think that weak Christians who play ouija boards are *demon-possessed*? When Peter denied Christ, was he temporarily *demon-possessed*? If so, why didn't Christ cast out Peter's demon?

Whereas Huebner read "demon" into origin-discussing authors (Tregelles, Smith, Payne, etc.) who didn't use such wording, he failed to cite Cameron who did use such terminology! (I've previously denounced Cameron's usage of such words and have shown that he exaggerated Baxter's 1833 account.)

When Ice's *Bib Sac* article focuses on Margaret's key

⁴¹Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Apr.-June, 1990).

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴³R. A. Huebner, *The Truth*, pp. 65-6.

revelation, he covers up what I said in my 1975 title *The Incredible Cover-up*, a book he cites several times. After my inclusion of her revelation, I wrote that the “point” (p. 154) to remember is that she saw “one taken and the other left” *before* “THE WICKED” (Antichrist) is “revealed” — Lindsey-like phrases found in this order within lines 58-63 in her revelation, phrases that Irvingite writings soon reflected.

Ice quotes excerpts up to line 55, skips over lines 58-63, resumes quoting in line 72, and then claims that I deduced pretrib from merely this statement of hers: “I saw it was just the Lord himself descending from Heaven with a shout, just the glorified man, even Jesus.”⁴⁴

But I deduced it from the phrases in lines 58-63 that Ice omitted during his extensive quotation! (Ryrie quoted “THE WICKED” phrase but ignored the crucial, *preceding* “one taken” phrase in the same way that Kelly spoke of Baxter’s belief in a future Antichrist but ignored his *preceding* rapture! Walvoord, playing it safe, didn’t quote or mention her key revelation but noted her experiences both *before* her key revelation and *after* it!⁴⁵)

Ice’s 1990 *Bib Sac* article is basically a rewrite of his own publication’s series the previous year. Again he majors on *secondary* sources that differ on the date of pretribism’s origination.

Amazingly enough, Ice comes perilously close to the earliest public teaching of pretrib but emerges unscathed. He quotes Harold Rowdon’s 1967 summary of the gist of T. W. C.’s indeterminate-gap article in *The Morning Watch* (September 1830). Since Ice’s quotation of Rowdon’s summary uses an ellipsis and omits “in an article in *The Morning Watch*” and since Ice says that what Rowdon summarized helped “for the first time” to create a climate for pretrib development, Ice’s readers can easily infer (after Rowdon’s source and date

⁴⁴Thomas D. Ice, “Why the Doctrine” etc., pp. 158-60.

⁴⁵Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know*, p. 71; John F. Walvoord, *Blessed Hope*, p. 44; *Rapture Question: Revised*, p. 153.

have been omitted) that Ice is talking about *Darby's* development. This is especially true since Ice ends his article with a Walvoord quote that credits only Darby!⁴⁶

While Ice gives such an impression, he knows privately that he's giving the Irvingites at least *partial* credit and denying his own long-held claim that Darby's pretrib view sprang only from underlying "truths" that Darby himself had been "recovering" from Scripture as early as 1827!

In fact, both Rowdon and Ice came close to the earliest public pretrib teaching: the "Fidus" article in *The Morning Watch* issue that also ran T. W. C.'s article.

So all that Thomas Ice has accomplished is the further muddying up of the origin waters that Kelly and Huebner have polluted.

Chief Critic Revisited

Although R. A. Huebner's 1973 defense of Darby had been used for support by Walvoord and some other dispensationalists, it hadn't convinced everyone. During the years following this Huebner book, many objective scholars with no axe to grind either for or against Darby began noticing the rediscovered facts about the birth of pretrib in 1830. And not a few began casting their ballots for someone in Irving's sphere of influence, especially a certain Scottish lassie.

Huebner's 1973 work hadn't been able to find even a hint of pretrib in Darby before 1834 (following Darby's "understanding" of pretrib in 1830). At the same time Huebner was aware that a few scholars, leaning on secondary sources, had begun noticing the Irvingites. In between Huebner's 1973 and 1991 works, the trickle of scholarship endorsing the primary data in my 1975 and 1983 titles eventually became what Huebner must have seen as a tidal wave of opposition to the pro-Darby position.

So what was Huebner to do? Dispensationalism was

⁴⁶Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine" etc., pp. 167-8.

increasingly coming under fire. Several highly publicized rapture date-settings had fizzled. Fortunes were being threatened. Dispensationalism seemed to be facing an “Armageddon” of rejection more than a “rapture” of acceptance.

But there was a silver lining. Huebner’s letter of March 20, 1989 confidently told Ice that he’d found new evidence linking 1827 with Darby; he implied that it was *pretrib* evidence. With only Huebner’s say-so, Ice was confident enough to include Huebner’s letter in both his *Biblical Perspectives* series and his *Bibliotheca Sacra* article.

Before we examine Huebner’s new evidence, let’s look at other aspects of his 1991 work.⁴⁷

Reflecting Darby, Kelly, and his 1973 book, Huebner showers his opponents with caustic language. They, he says constantly, are guilty of “calumny,” “animus,” etc. Simply because I’ve offered documented evidence about Darby, I’ve “calumniated and slandered JND for about 20 years.” Nine times on two pages he applies “calumniators” (and variations) to those who’ve suggested alternatives to the pro-Darby position: Pat Brooks, James McKeever, Dave MacPherson, B. W. Newton, S. P. Tregelles, Gary North, J. R. Boyd, Lord Congleton, Robert Norton, William R. Kimball, John A. Anderson, and Le Roy Froom!⁴⁸

We’ve already noted that on more than 50 pages of his 1991 defense, Huebner subtly disconnects “daily” from Darby’s “expectation” and connects it with “coming” — changes Darby’s hope for a final advent (following intermediate events) into an imminent, *pretrib* coming!

After he claims that “by 1829 at the latest” Darby “held a pre-Antichrist coming,” Huebner quotes several articles in *The Morning Watch* that opposed S. R. Maitland’s futurism, adding that what the Irvingites looked for was “the end of the 45 years!” — that is, only the final advent in about 1867.

⁴⁷R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby* (Present Truth Publishers, 1991).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 164-5.

Huebner thus gives the impression that the 1829 Darby was a Maitland-type futurist.⁴⁹

I. HUEBNER'S OMISSIONS

1. Maitland's 1829 and 1830 works taught a future tribulation of 1260 days. Since he was a posttrib, he held that Christ's final advent was at least 1260 days away.

2. Darby's December 1830 article sided with *The Morning Watch's* historicism of September 1829 *against* Maitland's futurism (as we've noted under "1830" in the chapter on Darby's early works). In this article Darby was still defending the historicist year-day theory and looked for only the post-Antichrist, judging-of-the-nations coming — the same final advent in about 1867. Thus while Maitland had to wait only three and a half years, Darby in 1830 had to wait at least 37 years. Huebner doesn't explain how Darby could expect a pre-Antichrist coming if he was watching for only a post-Antichrist coming!

(Keep the year 1867 in mind; it will play a vital role when we examine Huebner's new claim that Darby was a pretrib in 1827.)

In 1973 Huebner had overlooked the "Fidus" article of September 1830 but had quoted T. W. C.'s article in the same issue. After my 1983 book and an October 1990 paper of mine drew attention to the "Fidus" contribution (Huebner received both items), Huebner was under pressure to discuss it.

In 1991 he claims that the "Philadelphia" in this article is raptured before only a "period of great tribulation" and that "Fidus" didn't call this period "*the* great tribulation."⁵⁰ As we noted in our first chapter, four pages later "Fidus" did call this period "the great tribulation" — twice!

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 191-2.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 196.

II. HUEBNER'S 1991 SELECTIVITY

In 1991 Huebner again is selective when quoting *The Morning Watch*. Note that he consistently omits the many instances of clear pretrib teaching in this journal that we included in our Irving chapter:

1. Huebner quotes the June 1831 issue, page 277.⁵¹ He omits pretrib in the same issue on pages 284, 287-8, 301-2 (Irving's "man child" basis for pretrib that Darby adopted in 1839), 305, 471.

2. He quotes the December 1831 issue, pages 277-8, 282, 317.⁵² He omits pretrib in the same issue on pages 253-4, 260-1, 264, 276, 279, 281, 289-90, 324.

3. He quotes the March 1832 issue, page 45.⁵³ He omits pretrib in the same issue on pages 3, 5, 12-14, 23, 37, 42, 50.

4. He quotes the December 1831 issue, pages 321-23, 325.⁵⁴ See omissions in No. 2 (above); he again by-passes page 324, in between the pages just listed, which shows the first church/Israel "dichotomy" following a pretrib rapture.

5. He quotes the June 1832 issue, pages 309, 323.⁵⁵ He omits pretrib in the same issue on pages 269, 279, 281, 303, 373.

6. He quotes the March 1833 issue, page 149.⁵⁶ He omits pretrib in the same issue on pages 30-1, 62, 147.

Before we scrutinize Huebner's new evidence that he's sure will forever silence his opponents, let's inspect other chief points in his 1991 defense, remembering that he has a stake in magnifying Darby and miniaturizing everyone under Irving's "umbrella."

After correctly rejecting John L. Bray's McDougall-inspired assertion that Lacunza originated pretrib⁵⁷ (LaHaye

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 196-7.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 212.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 199, 200.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 150-1.

sides with Huebner and me against Bray), Huebner includes and then analyzes Margaret's key revelation. Let's observe his treatment of her.

III. HUEBNER ANALYZES MARGARET

1. Huebner first analyzes her *partial rapturism* and then, while avoiding even mentioning this label in connection with her words, concludes unfairly that she had only a "posttribulation" expectation (repeated 10 times in the rest of his chapter). In the next paragraph he refers to *The Morning Watch* as Irvingism's "organ," the term Kelly used in his 1889-90 series.⁵⁸

In the preface to his Irvingism appendix, Huebner lists the same Kelly series as his only source containing "an extensive history of the Irvingites."⁵⁹ Since he's well versed in important documents on Irvingism (including revisionist ones), Huebner knows that even Kelly was aware of early partial rapturism in the Irvingites; in Kelly's December 1890 installment he said that their "hope . . . is not the proper translation of the *whole* church" (emphasis mine). What Kelly covered up was not Irvingism's partial rapture but the fact that their partial rapturism *included* pretribism!

Throughout this century we've seen confusion over partial rapturism. Some dispensationalists have asserted that Margaret and the Irvingites couldn't have taught pretrib if they taught a partial rapture.

They've assumed that both of these terms answer the *when* question. Pretrib certainly establishes *when* in relation to other events. But partial rapturism answers only the *who* question — *who* will participate in the rapture no matter *when* it happens.

In order to understand the relationship of these terms, a bit of review is necessary.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 191.

Despite Lindsey's assumption that partial rapturism is a *recent* view,⁶⁰ we've seen that this view was the first deviation in the 1800's from what was then an 1800-year-old, one-stage, posttrib view. Before either Margaret or the Irvingites taught pretrib, *The Morning Watch* of 1829 developed a partial rapture in a posttrib setting featuring a tiny gap based on the difference between the 10th and 15th of Tisri — a view derived from the Jewish calendar that developed, within two years, a tribulation designed primarily for "the Jews"!

After borrowing from Irving the witnesses-represent-the-church ingredient she needed, Margaret in 1830 was the first to combine the *when* of pretribism with the *who* of partial rapturism that the priority-minded Irvingites had projected the previous year. Since 1830 partial rapturism has contained both pretrib and posttrib elements: *some* of the church will be in a pretrib rapture while the rest of the church will be left on earth.

2. Huebner extracts five phrases from Margaret's revelation that he feels will prove that she was a posttrib. One of them is the Antichrist phrase (line 63). But he fails to connect the preceding "one taken" phrase (line 58) with it. He also emphasizes the "us" in her revelation's second half and assumes that she identified with the tribulation's overcomers.⁶¹ But Huebner knows that "us" and "we" are also in the first half and that she used them in a corporate way in both halves. Obviously Margaret couldn't expect a rapture before Antichrist and also expect to be on earth during his reign! Huebner's juggling of "us" is a diversionary tactic so he can keep on crediting Darby.

3. Huebner also wants to discredit the trustworthiness of Margaret's biographer, Robert Norton. He even claims that Norton's 1861 version of her revelation "suppressed" part of his 1840 version. For example, his later version deleted: "The trial of the Church is from Antichrist." Huebner rea-

⁶⁰Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture*, p. 26.

⁶¹R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, p. 160.

sons that if this posttrib statement was in the earlier version and then deleted, Norton knew that this lassie was really a posttrib.⁶²

But Huebner is aware that in the second (tribulation) part of the 1861 version, Norton included Margaret's synonymous terms ("people of God," "Christ in us," etc.). And all such terms are in both halves of both versions! What's more, in both versions we see a *pre-Antichrist* catching up!

4. Huebner, moreover, has an incentive to see posttrib in Norton at the latest possible date. Huebner knows that if he can establish this, it will be believable that Margaret was posttrib — since many agree that she influenced Norton.

So Huebner includes three short quotes from Norton's 1839 work and repeats them on another page.⁶³ But Huebner selectively focuses on what Norton said about the *posttrib* aspect of his own partial rapturism and ignores the fact that Norton's view included a prior coming. Only *three pages after* Huebner's quotation of the same 1839 book, Norton wrote that "Christ will reveal himself to his church, in loveliness and love, as her glorious Bridegroom — previous to his revealing himself to the world in the awful character of Judge" (hardly a posttrib-only coming).⁶⁴

Huebner's New (1827) Evidence

Since Huebner knew that the Irvingites had publicly taught pretrib as early as September 1830, all he could hope for in 1973 was an emphasis in his book on Darby's so-called underlying "truths" which supposedly evolved into pretrib, "truths" Darby reportedly had on his own as early as his first (1827) paper.

But during the 1970's and 1980's Huebner was aware

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 161-3.

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 162, 201.

⁶⁴Robert Norton, *Neglected and Controverted Scripture Truths* etc. (London: John F. Shaw, 1839), p. 278.

that many scholars were accepting my evidence that Darby hadn't been the first to express pretrib and that the well-known "truths" hadn't been used by anyone to create pretrib; they were used only *after* pretrib's emergence as further support.

Since Darby himself didn't establish a link between these "truths" and his understanding of pretrib in 1830 (if his 1850 memory is believable), Huebner's only hope was to find Darby expressing pretrib even *before* 1830. This way he could continue to discredit all of Darby's competitors.

Huebner's 1973 book declared his familiarity with the Lacunza work containing Irving's preliminary discourse. This discourse stated all of Darby's "truths" before Darby stated them. Even though this discourse was published the same year as Darby's first paper — 1827 — Huebner had no reason for concern: the Irvingites never claimed that their pretrib position sprang from the "truths" in this discourse.

Well, since neither the Irvingites nor the Brethren used these "truths" to arrive at a pretrib rapture, Huebner evidently realized, when confronted more and more by those preferring to credit Irving and his friends, that he would have to have something more solid than early "truths." He would have to find Darby teaching pretrib as early as possible. Of course he couldn't expect to find the Brethren leader embracing this publicly before his first (1827) paper.

Eventually Huebner found what he claims is unanswerable proof that Darby was a pretrib rapturist in 1827. He presents it in his 1991 book, a book that knows how often and how close it can come to the pretrib "cobra" in *The Morning Watch* without getting bitten!⁶⁵

But if Huebner does in fact believe in his new 1827 claim for Darby, he has no reason to keep on detouring around Irvingism's 1830-and-later contributions. If Darby really did hold to pretrib in 1827, it would have been advantageous for Darby (and Huebner) to highlight (and not cover up) Irvingite

⁶⁵R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*.

development; *they could have shown a Darby so innovative and influential he influenced even the Irvingite outsiders!*

The fact that Huebner, parroting Kelly, consistently conceals the Irvingite "achievement" tells me that Huebner is unsure of his 1827 claim for Darby. Indeed, when we go through Huebner's 1991 work, we see that he not only has second thoughts about his 1827 evidence but even explodes it in a later footnote!

Huebner's fresh evidence is found in Darby's Memory No. 6 which was discussed briefly in our chapter on his reminiscences. Huebner says that this 1879 recollection expressed what Darby was thinking no later than January of 1827.⁶⁶

In this memory, written 52 years after 1827, Darby wrote: "I saw there would be a David reign, and did not know whether the church might not be removed before forty years' time."

After including this quote, Huebner writes that by January 1827 Darby "had already understood those truths upon which the pretribulation rapture hinges."

But even more remarkable is Huebner's interpretation of what Darby wrote. He says that by this date Darby had "learned" that "Christ might come forty years before he would set up the Kingdom."⁶⁷

Once again we see Huebner shifting a word around so that he can derive a conclusion and continue to credit Darby. Previously we've seen him taking Darby's *daily expectation* of Christ's *coming* and subtly detaching "daily" from "expectation" and attaching it to "coming" in order to change a final advent into a pretrib rapture.

This time Huebner takes the "before" which precedes Darby's 40 years and places it (in his interpretation) *after* the same years! But there's a huge difference. Darby in 1879 was merely recalling that in 1827, when he was still a historian, he was expecting the final advent around the end of a

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 24. But it's obvious to most of us that "before forty years" doesn't mean the same thing as "forty years before."

remaining 40-year period. If, as Huebner asserts, Darby was saying that he expected the church's removal 40 years *before* "the Kingdom," Darby should have written "forty years before" instead of putting "before" where he did!

The same language is used today. If a youngster says at 11 in the morning that he'll mow a lawn and be finished before an hour's time, we assume he'll be finished by noon; we surely don't conclude (if he mentions an hour) that he'll be finished before the hour begins!

Also note that this 1879 Darby memory used the term "removed." Since his 1829 work spoke of an earthly "refuge" to "preserve" the church during a future earthly "scourge," his belief in 1827 of the church's removal at the start of a future millennium is hardly a concept of a pretrib (or even a small-gap, prior) rapture. Besides, we now know that in 1829 and 1830 he was expecting only the Revelation 19 coming.

Readers may wonder why this 1879 memory pinpointed 40 years and not 30 or 50 years. When I first saw this new Huebner evidence, I realized that Darby's "forty years" was a vital aspect of the historicism that was still prevalent in the 1820's. Advocates, employing Daniel's 1260, 1290, and 1335 days which had long been viewed as *years*, were agreed that the 1260 *years* had ended around 1792 (the curtailment of Papal power during the French Revolution), the 1290 around 1822, and that the 1335 would end around 1867 (the approximate time of the second advent, according to their view).

One of Le Roy Froom's volumes has a chart analyzing the leading historicists between the French revolution and the mid-1800's (those who promoted the above time periods as early as 1794 and as late as 1842). Of the 26 who ended the 1335 years during the 1860's, three ended them in 1866, seven in 1868, and the majority (14) ended them in 1867. Those who pinpointed 1867 included Edward Irving (in an 1826 work of his); but he was only reflecting William Cuninghame (1813), James Frere (1813), Charles Maitland

(1814), Archibald Mason (1820), and Edward Cooper (1825).⁶⁸

The slight differences (1866-1868) were over the beginning of the 1335 years — whether Justinian's edict (the start of the 1260-year tribulation) was in force in 533 AD or slightly earlier or later.

Huebner gives the impression that Darby in the 1820's was a thoroughgoing futurist holding to a future tribulation of 1260 literal days. But he was still defending the year-day theory in his December 1830 article. We've also seen Darby's 1832 paper criticizing futurism leader William Burgh; Darby was concerned "that Mr. Burgh's views divert the attention of Christians from the present anti-christian principles . . . to some supposed or future actings of a personal Antichrist. . . ."

If Darby in 1827 was a futurist, he wouldn't have written about a future period of 40 *years*. He would have expected a future period of 1260 *days*, following by 30 more *days*, followed by 45 *days*. His recollection that around 1827 he saw 40 more *years* takes us to 1867 — and most historicists in 1827 likewise saw only about 40 remaining years. Moreover, if Darby in 1827 was a pretrib, he wouldn't have been expecting even a future 40-*day* period, let alone one of 40 *years*; he would have expected a rapture before even the initial 1260 days!

Everyone agrees that Darby was a posttrib when he was ordained as an Anglican clergyman in 1825. And all agree that from the 1840's until his death in the 1880's he was clearly pretrib. Evidence demonstrates that in his 1829 and 1830 works he expected only the Revelation 19 (posttrib) coming.

Huebner's new 1991 claim that Darby was pretrib in 1827 fashions a Darby who was posttrib (1825), then pretrib (1827), then posttrib (1829-30), then finally pretrib! But who can seriously imagine such a wishy-washy Darby?

As early as 1988, German author Max Weremchuk published the 1879 memory into which Huebner in 1991 read

⁶⁸Le Roy Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. IV, pp. 404-5.

his pretrib-by-1827 claim for Darby. But not even Weremchuk, a Darby expert, saw pretrib in it. And Weremchuk told me in 1993 that Huebner was familiar with Weremchuk's 1988 book before he produced his 1991 title.⁶⁹ (While Weremchuk's bibliography lists Huebner's 1973 book, Huebner in 1991 fails to list Weremchuk's 1988 work.)

After presenting his new evidence for Darby, Huebner's 1991 book repeatedly states on following pages that he has *proven* that Darby was pretrib in 1827: "in 1827" Darby "held that the Lord might come 40 years before the reign of Christ," "already in 1827 he held a coming of the Lord before the Antichrist," "JND's mind was settled on the subject of the pretribulation rapture in the 1820s," etc.⁷⁰

After parading these we've-proven-it statements, Huebner explodes his 1827 claim for Darby in the middle of his 1991 defense. He writes, concerning the Darby "forty years" quote: "Perhaps this means that he had thought that there might be a time interval of 40 years between when the church would be removed and the reign of Christ would begin. Or, he may have thought that the 40 years would be a period during which the enemies would be put down before the commencement of the kingdom (David reigned 40 years)."⁷¹

So, with belated second thoughts, Huebner admits that the 40 years in Darby's 1879 memory can just as easily refer to a final 40-year period of judgment! This sort of end-time judgment was typical of historicist outlook in the late 1820's which then saw the church past even the 1290 years and well into the final 45-year, judgments-packed "countdown."

So, after all of the advance publicity from Thomas Ice in even *Bib Sac* in 1990, and after Huebner presents his new evidence in 1991, Huebner admits halfway through the same

⁶⁹Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby*, p. 120; letter from Weremchuk dated Mar. 5, 1993.

⁷⁰R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths*, pp. 74-5, 86.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 100, footnote 24.

defense that he *hasn't* proven that Darby's 40 years involved a pretrib (or even a prior) rapture!

But after this incredible admission, he continues to say that he's proven (!) that Darby was pretrib in 1827: Darby "understood the truth of the rapture in 1827," etc.⁷²

In late 1991 in another publication of his, Thomas Ice declared without reservation that Huebner's 1991 defense of Darby "documents" the fact that Darby held to pretrib as early as January 1827 (even though Darby at the time had only his "heavenly" theme which wasn't original). While still evidently unaware that Huebner had merely copied Kelly's selective-quotation and memory-injecting tactics in order to discredit the Irvingites and credit Darby, Ice also stated that Huebner has shown that the early Irvingites *never* held to pretrib.⁷³

Since Ice apparently has been as intent as Huebner on defending and crediting Darby, I wrote him and asked if he'd been aware that Huebner's 1991 book explodes its new 1827 evidence on page 100. Ice had given this new claim a rave review and said publicly that Huebner has "positive evidence" that Darby was pretrib in 1827. Ice wrote back and admitted that he "did not overlook" Huebner's page 100 admission!⁷⁴

Honest unawareness of historical data is one thing. But when we find Huebner, imitating Kelly, consistently coming within a sentence of clear pretrib teaching in Irvingism, it's impossible to believe that they didn't know what they were doing when they repeatedly played "leapfrog" over evidence that could have credited the Irvingites. If what they censored wasn't clearly pretrib, there would have been no reason for such a sustained pattern of deliberate omission.

And how can Ice give Huebner's new evidence his unqualified endorsement if he is aware, as he admitted, that Huebner himself had second thoughts and said later on in

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷³Thomas Ice, "Did J. N. Darby Believe in the Pretrib Rapture by 1827?" (*Dispensational Distinctives*, Nov.-Dec., 1991), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁴Letter from Ice dated Mar. 27, 1992.

the same book that Darby's "forty years" phrase *isn't* proof that Darby in 1827 was pretrib? If Ice can perpetuate what Huebner himself has in effect canceled, my own readers may be able to supply an appropriate adjective for Ice's eyes-wide-open action.

Also in 1991 came the reprint of Gerald Stanton's *Kept From the Hour*, originally published in 1956. Stanton evidently still doesn't know that for centuries historicists, who thought they were well into and even near the end of a 1260-year tribulation, viewed Revelation 3:10's "hour" as something the church had always expected to face. Even when the early Irvingites gave the same "hour" a new twist — an "hour" not to endure but to be raptured away from — even they noticed the cluster of "hour" in Revelation 17 and 18 but initially didn't interpret this word as a seven-year or even a three-and-a-half-year tribulation. As noted, later developers eventually did arrive at a seven-year tribulation and applied Revelation 3:10's "hour" to it.

Stanton's reprint discusses the pretrib origin and refers to secondary sources such as Reese, Ladd (quoting Tregelles), Payne, and Gundry. But Stanton rests his Darby-crediting position on other secondary sources such as Huebner's "scholarly historical sketch" of 1973 and those Huebner has influenced including Bray (1982), Walvoord (1979), and Ice (1990).

In 1992 Tim LaHaye's latest "pop" prophecy book appeared. Its title: *No Fear of the Storm*.⁷⁵

While much of it appears to be a condensation of his earlier prophecy books, he does rehash what some others have asserted about the pretrib origin. In order to credit Darby and discredit others, he leans heavily on Huebner and those Huebner has swayed.

One of his secondary sources is Walvoord (who leaned on Huebner who, like Kelly, censored *The Morning Watch*

⁷⁵Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm*.

and who also misread Tregelles who leaned at least indirectly on Baxter who didn't quote *The Morning Watch*).

Another such source is *Huebner himself* (who, like Kelly, censored *The Morning Watch* and who also misread Tregelles who leaned at least indirectly on Baxter who didn't quote *The Morning Watch*).

An additional source is *Bray* (who misread a Darby memory which exaggerated Darby's earliest words, and who also leaned on Huebner who, like Kelly, censored *The Morning Watch* and who also misread Tregelles who leaned at least indirectly on Baxter who didn't quote *The Morning Watch*).

Still another secondary source used by LaHaye is *Ice* (who leaned on Huebner who, like Kelly, censored *The Morning Watch* and who also misread Tregelles who leaned at least indirectly on Baxter who didn't quote *The Morning Watch*).

My apologies if this is beginning to sound like "The House That Jack Built"!

When LaHaye reproduced Margaret Macdonald's brief account of her key revelation, he omitted 48 words — the same 48 words in the same places that Ice had omitted three years earlier (see Appendix A). I wrote both LaHaye and Ice in early 1993 about this massive omission. Neither has ever responded.

LaHaye's Notions

Finally, if I fail to rectify some notions that LaHaye has repeated, others in the 20th century tradition of copying (and miscopying) may very well repeat and even embellish them.

LaHaye gives the impression that my father, Norman, changed from pretrib to posttrib *during* his Southern California pastorate from which he was ousted, and that Biola's position on the rapture was the *only* one ever held by that Los Angeles school. LaHaye even has a chapter about me entitled "MacPherson's Vendetta"⁷⁶ and assumes that personal

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 180-1, 115-34.

revenge on my part is the reason for my decades-long research on pretrib beginnings.

For the record here are my responses:

1. My father changed from pretrib to posttrib before his 1944 book *Triumph Through Tribulation*. Through meetings in my parents' living room, the church in question was formed in 1947. Folks knew about his previous change, but he was always a calm and scholarly preacher, almost never brought up posttrib, and never made any rapture view a test of fellowship. Later on, some pretrib outsiders joined, evidently intent on making the church a pretrib church.

I still have the handwritten notes that my mother took at the May 16, 1951, ouster meeting. One of the voiced criticisms of my father that she recorded: "He has no right to interpret prophecy contrary to Scofield." (This critic obviously was influenced only by Scripture and not by human agency in the same way Darby was!)

2. The doctrinal statement in Biola's catalog says merely that the "Lord Jesus is coming again to his earth, personally, bodily, and visibly." The school's founders chose such a broad statement because they wanted persons to have freedom to hold and discuss what were then viewed as non-essentials: for example, differing tribulational and millennial views.

Nowadays the Biola catalog includes this explanatory note (following the doctrinal statement): "The Scriptures are to be interpreted according to dispensational distinctives with the conviction that the return of the Lord for His Church will be premillennial, before the Tribulation, and that the Millennium is to be the last of the dispensations."

When I applied in 1952 for admission to the original Bible Institute of Los Angeles campus in downtown L. A., I was given the original doctrinal statement which allows for non-conflicting non-essentials.

Since my father had been a schoolmate of Biola's president at Princeton Seminary (hardly a pretrib school), I saw no harm in occasionally sharing copies of my father's 1944

book with some student friends and some of my teachers. If the school had told me to stop this, I would have. If I had been a threat all year to Biola's "official" position, why did it wait until just *two weeks* before the end of the school year to kick me out?

Throughout this century pretrib has changed from being a non-essential to being an expedient essential at Biola and many similar schools, primarily because of its tremendous fund-raising potential. A look back will reveal more.

The fact that almost half of the consulting editors listed in the front of the Scofield Bible were posttrib in outlook tells us how Scofield himself interpreted "essential."

Ernest Sandeen informs us that Lyman and Milton Stewart, two wealthy brothers who became the Union Oil Company's chief stockholders, were enormous financial contributors to Biola during its earliest growth. Lyman personally put up \$300,000 for the publication of *The Fundamentals*, a series of Biola-published volumes first appearing in 1910 that contained articles by Christian leaders on all cardinal beliefs of Christianity. A. C. Dixon was chosen to head this undertaking, Dixon's committee included Henry Crowell, R. A. Torrey, and Elmore Harris, and by 1915 the 3,000,000th volume had been distributed worldwide.⁷⁷

Sandeen adds that although Lyman and his colleagues personally favored pretrib dispensationalism, they viewed it as an optional (and not essential) belief. Only *two* of the 90 articles in *The Fundamentals* focused on the second coming and both expressed only a moderate millenarian viewpoint, says Sandeen.⁷⁸ But both were more than that: neither had even a hint of a pretrib rapture!

The first of these two articles was by John McNicol, principal of the Toronto Bible Training School.⁷⁹ Even though

⁷⁷Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, pp. 189-96.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 203-6.

⁷⁹Rev. John McNicol, "The Hope of the Church," *The Fundamentals*, Amzi C. Dixon, Louis Meyer, & Reuben A. Torrey, eds. (The Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917), Vol. IV, pp. 287-300.

McNicol saw significance in “types” and referred to the “day of atonement” in the ancient Jewish feast schedule, he applied only this “day” to the church — and not the earlier feast of firstfruits as a basis for pretrib, as Scofield and others had done — and said that the church is waiting for the I Thessalonians 4:17 coming, which he tied to the Isaiah 63:1 coming.⁸⁰ (Scofield ties this Isaiah verse to the Revelation 19 coming.)

Professor Charles Erdman of Princeton Seminary authored the second article.⁸¹ He stated: “The Bible further describes the coming of Christ as *imminent*.” But he didn’t see an *any-moment* imminence. His next sentence: “It is an event which may occur in any lifetime.” And he tied the only coming he expected to Matthew 24:42; Mark 13:35, 37; and Luke 21:36.⁸² (Scofield ties these references to the final, posttrib advent.)

Thus we note a great difference between Biola’s “official” position in the 1950’s and its *original* position. But I had known nothing about its original outlook and practice during my year (minus two weeks) on its campus.

3. LaHaye concludes wrongfully that my pretrib origin research of a quarter of a century is nothing more than my vengeful reaction to what happened to my family in the 1950’s.

If so, it must be one of the slowest reactions ever. I didn’t even wonder about the origin until *two decades after* the California incidents. Long before my research began, numerous tragedies including untimely death had overtaken the ringleaders in the church trouble. During the years between the early 1950’s and the early 1970’s (when my research began), I was never bitter towards anyone at either the church or Biola — and haven’t been down to the present day.

Speaking of reactions, LaHaye says in *No Fear of the*

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 295-6.

⁸¹Professor Charles R. Erdman, “The Coming of Christ,” *The Fundamentals*, Vol. IV, pp. 301-313.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 309.

Storm's introduction that his book was "ignited" by an old friend's letter which viciously attacked pretrib, a friend who had reportedly been too chummy with "Reconstructionists."

Having reacted to his friend and to my long-endorsed findings, perhaps LaHaye will now find occasion to react to the ones between 1889 and 1991 who have adopted the partial blindness position when coming dangerously close to pretrib in early Irvingism.

Jeffrey's Confusion

Appearing also in 1992 was Grant Jeffrey's *Apocalypse*, which preceded his 1994 Bantam edition.⁸³ It, too, discusses the roots of pretrib.

He asserts that posttribs claim that pretrib emerged in 1820. Five pages later this becomes 1830. Three pages later this again becomes 1820 (twice) and is repeated on the following page.⁸⁴ (And LaHaye, 1992, p. 168, says that present-day critics of those crediting Darby have *never* suggested that Darby arrived at pretrib before 1831!)

Why this intentional or careless muddying up of the year 1830? Since my first book (1973) I've emphasized 1830 as pretrib's year of birth. And so have many others, even though there's been a wide range of end-time views among them. Huebner (1973) saw 1830 as the earliest year for a Darby connection with this view, and Darby himself claimed in his 1850 reminiscence that 1830 was when he first understood a prior rapture. The year 1830 is tied to the first public teaching of pretrib by Irvingites as well as to Margaret. And Kelly himself never even questioned Darby's reference to 1830.

I don't know of a single writer (Jeffrey didn't provide even one) who has ever offered evidence that anyone was developing pretrib as early as 1820. Irving, Darby, and their friends certainly weren't developing it then.

⁸³Grant R. Jeffrey, *Apocalypse* (Bantam Books, 1994).

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 101, 106, 109, 110.

Jeffrey also sees pretrib in some pre-1830 writings and quotes a portion of the 2nd century *Didache*. In the part Jeffrey quotes, the early writer said that the Antichrist “shall appear” and “shall work signs and wonders” during a “fire of trial” (Jeffrey omits this last phrase). In the next sentence that Jeffrey includes, the same early writer wrote: “And then shall the signs of the truth appear, first the sign of a rift in heaven, then the sign of the sound of a trumpet, and thirdly, a resurrection of the dead.” (Even though the trumpet-sounding rapture *follows* the Antichrist’s reign, Jeffrey concludes that this early document taught that a rapture will *precede* the Antichrist!)⁸⁵

Throughout his book Jeffrey confuses Lactantius and Victorinus; when he first quotes Lactantius, all of the lines are really the words of Victorinus and are found in the Victorinus quote that Jeffrey includes two pages earlier! He also quotes *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, apparently unaware that it’s another title for the *Didache* which he’d quoted five pages earlier (which we’ve just analyzed). This time he chops off quotation after the first two sentences — what Walvoord (1954), Stanton (1956), and Pentecost (1958) did to read pretrib into them and ignore the clear posttrib teaching in the rest of the quotation!⁸⁶

For his clincher, having merely rewritten other pretrib works selectively quoting some early Christians, Jeffrey claims that Pierre (whom he calls Peter) Jurieu (1637-1713) taught pretrib. Jurieu’s work, according to Jeffrey, spoke of “a kind of a clandestine coming of Christ.” Since “clandestine” means “secret,” Jeffrey concludes that this Frenchman was teaching a secret, *pretrib* rapture! But then he quotes Jurieu’s explanation that this coming will occur “at the coming of His Kingdom” and says that Jurieu was actually teaching a coming prior to Armageddon. At this point Jeffrey has apparently confused “tribulation” with “Armageddon,” even

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 105, 107-8.

though he has a chart elsewhere showing Armageddon *after the tribulation*.⁸⁷

From time to time throughout this century, there have been those who've claimed they've spotted at least a hint of pretrib in some pre-1830 writer. The writers most frequently named include Ribera, Bellarmine, Mede, Bengel, Keach, Gill, Oetinger, and Lacunza.

Whenever one examines the context of these "hints" and also notes that their contemporaries saw nothing significantly new in the same "hints," the conclusion is that a handful of modern writers, for a variety of motives, has simply read into the earlier writers what the modern writers wished to see. We've previously noted that older hymns etc. have even been *changed* for the same purpose!

After pretrib appeared in 1830, Brethren as well as Irvingites were well aware of the above pre-1830 scholars, occasionally quoted them, but never noticed any of the "hints" some modern writers have claimed to discover. Moreover, Brethren and Irvingites collectively had equally knowledgeable outside critics who could have cited pre-1830 "hints" in order to deflate later claims made by both Brethren and Irvingites — if, in fact, pre-1830 "hints" had existed!

As more and more pretrib origin evidence continues to credit Irvingism and discredit Darbyism, dispensationalists may be under increasing pressure to either credit the Irvingites or find some pre-1830 "hint" that everyone else has overlooked.

Or they just may decide to abandon their theological system altogether.

Boiling it Down

The dispensationalist who non-literally phoned me in the chapter on Darby's early works phoned me again. He wanted me to boil down, in my "own words," the earliest

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 29, 110-11.

pretrib development. Here's what was said:

Dispensationalist: Dave, can you boil down, in your own words, the earliest pretrib development?

Me: I'll be glad to.

Dispensationalist: My teachers have long said that the most important underlying "truth" which led to pretrib was the church/Israel "dichotomy," which means "separation."

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: I've gone through Darby's works up to and through 1830 and he doesn't have any dichotomy between the church and the Jews. In 1827 he had his "heavenly" theme, echoing Irving in 1825 and Lacunza in 1812, but no dichotomy. In 1828 he talked about "unity" the way Irving and Lacunza did, but again no dichotomy. In 1829 he expected only the Revelation 19 coming, following intermediate events, and saw no dichotomy during either the tribulation or a following millennium — all omitted by Huebner. Even if he'd had a millennial dichotomy, it wouldn't have been a support for pretrib. In December of 1830 he again expected only the Revelation 19 coming, which Huebner does admit. But Huebner again overlooks that this coming followed intermediate events and that Darby still didn't have a church/Israel dichotomy during the tribulation or anything else. It seems that Huebner, wishing to credit Darby, had read church/Israel *dichotomy* into church/Israel *distinction* — a distinction that the church had always seen prior to 1830.

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: And when I went through your chapter on Darby's reminiscences, I couldn't find him expressing a dichotomy even in his later, exaggerated memories. Memories 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 mention Isaiah 32. But my teachers, including Walvoord, say that Isaiah 32 isn't on "church" ground and that a pretrib rapture isn't found anywhere in the Old Testament. How can Isaiah 32 portray such a dichotomy if the "church" half of the dichotomy is missing? And Memories 2 and 7 say nothing about the Jews. Since his dichotomy

was non-existent through December 1830 — he saw both the church and Israel together on earth until the Revelation 19 coming — it appears that the only separation in Darby's early progress was the separation between Darby and the dichotomy!

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: Besides, the "truths" that reportedly evolved into pretrib were all held by Irving in 1825 in his preliminary discourse, or preface, to *Lacunza* and published in 1827. Only after Darby's "heavenly" (1827) and "unity" (1828) — which weren't original — do we see him in 1829 with some detailed development. Even if we give Irving's "truths" an 1827 date, 1827 is before 1829. And well-read Darby, fluent in several modern languages as well as ancient Biblical languages, knew about Irving's "truths." In his 1829 work, Darby expressed his familiarity with the ideas "throughout this preface" to *Lacunza*, quoted page 55 in it, summarized pages 55-65, and came close to Irving's "truths." For example, on page 53 Irving used "expectation" while holding to intermediate events and on page 67 he used the phrase "look daily for the coming" — even though Irving then expected only the Revelation 19 coming. Obviously Darby was influenced by Irving and by other earlier writers!

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: But not even the Irvingites derived pretrib from these "truths" which were theirs and not Darby's. Their first public pretrib teaching in September 1830 — while Darby still defended posttrib three months later — was based on "Philadelphia" raptured and "Laodicea" left on earth, and not on the dichotomy or other "truths" that my teachers have credited Darby with. Only after pretrib was established did the Irvingites use the dichotomy for further support. Their first public pretrib was only a church/church dichotomy between "Philadelphia" and "Laodicea." Not until a year later did *The Morning Watch* see a tribulation primarily for "the Jews" and not "Laodicea" — a true church/Israel dichotomy

explicitly separating church members and Jews and emphasizing the latter even though God wasn't supposed to be dealing again with the Jews until the vicinity of the final advent which was then about 36 years in the future! The Irvingites sure seemed to be unnecessarily and arbitrarily anti-Jewish, right?

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: Even Darby's first "understanding" in 1830, based on his 1850 memory, and his first "hint" of pretrib in 1834, based on his words at the time, weren't based on the church/Israel dichotomy. They were drawn from what seemed to be an order of events in the Thessalonian letters — "church" ground. Whereas Isaiah 32 didn't have the first half of the dichotomy, the Thessalonian epistles didn't clearly have the second half. So the underlying "truths" weren't used by either the Irvingites or Darby to either initially understand or initially teach pretrib. And even Darby used the dichotomy only after pretrib's arrival — as additional support.

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: And it seems that Darby was behind others in everything. He was defending posttrib three months after the Irvingites were clearly pretrib. He was behind others on even the so-called underlying "truths." His 1830 statement about the "Gentile parenthesis" was almost a duplicate of what William Davis of South Carolina wrote in 1811. And Lacunza (1812) and *The Morning Watch* (1829) also used "parenthesis." When Darby finally had clear pretrib teaching in 1839, his basis was the Revelation 12 "man child" symbol with support soon coming from I Corinthians 12's mystical "body" — but Irving's pretrib basis in 1831 was the same symbol with the same support!

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: If Darby really wasn't a year-day late and a British pound short, why have some individuals taken great pains to cover up pretrib in the Irvingites? Why did Kelly, with Darby's approval, fashion footnotes from Darby's

much later writings and add them to Darby's early writings in order to "mature" him? And why, for the same purpose, did Kelly add bracketed insertions within Darby's text and even reveal in a footnote to Darby's 1830 work that he wasn't against "suppressing" and "changing" Darby's own words? Since Darby lived many more years after the revisionism of his own words had begun — revisionism less subtle than Darby had intended — why didn't Darby object? Did he think that no one would ever notice? And why has Kelly's massive and desperate revisionism between 1889 and 1903 been unobserved until now? If the most important thing is what the Bible teaches, Kelly should have stuck to Bible teaching and not engineered his clever distortions of the Irvingites and even fellow Brethren member Tregelles.

Maybe you should call this whole thing "Rapturegate" or refer to the Brethren "grinch" who stole the Irvingite "Christmas"!

Me: That's right.

Dispensationalist: Something else. My teachers admit that the most crucial underlying "truth" that supposedly led to pretrib was the church/Israel "dichotomy" which means "separation." And when will this separation take place? At the start of a future tribulation. By what means? The pretrib rapture. If the pretrib rapture itself is the separation between the church and the ones that my teachers call "Israel" — and it is — then the pretrib rapture *itself* is this "dichotomy"! It's like saying that "The pretrib rapture was the main truth that led to the pretrib rapture" or "The pretrib rapture sprang from itself"!

I know I've taken too much of your time. But I'm grateful for all of the enlightenment you've just given me during this phone call. Many thanks. Good-bye.

Me: Good-bye.

Well, it certainly was nice to get another phone call from that dispensationalist. If I'd known about him years ago, he could have written the present book and saved me a lot of time and trouble!

The Bottom Line

But now I have an important announcement, a confession you probably thought I'd never make. Here it is:

My conclusion that Margaret Macdonald originated the pretribulation rapture isn't all that important. What's important is that Darby was clearly preceded by others including writers for *The Morning Watch*. Equally important is the fact of a clever plot in the late 1800's covering everything up that somehow has escaped all other researchers.

Let's imagine a reversal of the roles: Darby originates and develops pretrib. Margaret and the Irvingites borrow it from him. They cover up his development and exaggerate their own. Later on, an editor of early Irvingite writings covers up Darby's earliest development and "matures" his own early leaders.

If the roles had been reversed, this fact wouldn't have changed the fact that pretrib emerged when it did. And it wouldn't have changed the fact that over the years pretrib has rested not on explicit scriptural statements but on a variety of symbols such as Revelation 11's "two witnesses" (early 1830), Revelation 3's "Philadelphia" (late 1830), Revelation 12's "man child" (1831), and eventually Revelation 4's "John" (1870's).

Twentieth century confusion over the pretrib origin has come about largely because scholars have been unaware of rare, hard-to-find documents throwing light on Irvingism's beginning development. Without knowledge of Darby's chief competition, they simply haven't been in a position to carefully compare early Irvingites with early Brethren.

And many scholars majoring on historical themes have often covered periods much longer than the 1820's and 1830's, and regional areas larger than Britain, and thus haven't had any reason for the narrow focus found in the present book.

At the same time we've observed that two writers, defenders of Darby 70 years apart, have indeed had access to all of the necessary primary documents. But, unfortunately,

both have failed to produce balanced and objective summaries of the early evidence. It's been more important for them to be able to credit an early Brethren leader, a leader to whom both have unhesitatingly, and wholeheartedly, and almost obsessively given their allegiance!

Since both have greatly influenced others, especially dispensationalists who've seemed to have no reason to distrust them, the confusion they've created in regard to the origin is practically immeasurable.

Such confusion, even if it has been unintentional in those who've merely echoed the two writers, has enabled dispensationalism itself to stay in existence; if nothing bad can be seen in its roots, then followers tend to see nothing bad in its fruits. It's almost as if certain dispensationalist leaders sense the distinct benefits that origin *confusion* can produce for themselves!

Over the years I've privately contacted hundreds of the best-known evangelical scholars in regard to their prophetic views. The vast majority — whether amillennial, postmillennial, or premillennial — harmonizes I Thessalonians 4's coming with Matthew 24's coming, but the general public doesn't know this. If just a minority of these one-stagers were to publicly reveal their positions, pretrib dispensationalism would receive a death blow.

As I wrote in the preface, this is a book about trust. But many who have placed their trust in a pretrib rapture and who have trusted pretrib teachers simply haven't known a fraction of the historical documentation that's just been shared.

Even though I'm a historian, I'm willing to forget the past (which can't be changed anyway). And willing to forget the vast amounts of time, energy, and money that have been showered on a 19th century theory which, among other things, has

1. Made a few promoters wealthy at the expense of trusting supporters who've regularly been disillusioned after numerous rapture date-setting fizzles.

2. Diverted millions of dollars away from reaching the ones who, in a variety of ways, now threaten to destroy the western Christian civilization that has benefited even the would-be destroyers.

3. Kept Christians from getting actively involved in leadership positions in long range church, social, and political issues because “Christ can return at any moment” and “We’ll be raptured before things really get bad.”

But things haven’t always been like this. During the 18th and 19th centuries genuine revival during the First and Second Great Awakenings swept two continents before pretrib dispensationalism emerged and extinguished the flames. Willard A. Ramsey’s *Zion’s Glad Morning*, produced by this present book’s publisher, shows how this disaster occurred.

I’m even willing to forgive the plotter and his recent imitator.

Those who’ve echoed them have generally been ignorant of their tactics. But now with this book’s evidence out in the open, no one can plead ignorance any longer.

The real test is ahead. If pretrib promoters ignore or twist this book’s documentation, and if their only bottom line is a continuing flow of funds, then I won’t be surprised if God views them collectively as an “Achan” (Josh. 7) and allows a national or even international money collapse!

I’m not expressing any particular end-time view by saying this. I’m only stating the principle Jesus gave when He said that we can’t put money on an *equal* level with serving God.

Having shared all of the basic facts about the rapture plot, I now withdraw from the platform.

The future aftereffects are up to you!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RECENT [Mis]COPYING

Tim LaHaye did me a great favor. He wrote *No Fear of the Storm*.¹ It includes a 20-page chapter entitled “MacPherson’s Vendetta” — his reaction to my decades of research on the 19th century origin of Protestant evangelicalism’s famous and lucrative pretribulation rapture view of the second coming.

While flipping LaHaye’s pages in order to spot his comments on the pretrib origin, I quickly found one sentence on page 180 that has *four* historical errors.

In it he asserts that 19th century (Plymouth) Brethren scholar S. P. Tregelles claimed in two of his *books*, spaced 11 years apart, that fellow Brethren member J. N. Darby derived pretrib from the *Jews* and *Margaret Macdonald*. Since Margaret wasn’t Jewish, LaHaye sees Tregelles naming two different sources and contradicting himself.

If you’ve been totally immersed in pretrib rapture origin research since 1970 (as I have), you’ll soon find (as I did) these four errors:

1. The two Tregelles works were not two books but an article (1855) and a book (1864).
2. They were nine years apart.
3. The article spoke only of “Judaisers” within Christianity. (This was the first time I’d ever found anyone claim-

¹Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm* (subtitle: *Why Christians will Escape All the Tribulation*) (Multnomah Press Books, 1992).

ing that the *Jews* had been blamed for originating pretrib!)

4. The book referred to “an ‘utterance’ in Mr. Irving’s Church.” (Margaret never even visited Edward Irving’s church!)

LaHaye obviously had been influenced by other writers, including R. A. Huebner and John Walvoord, who had previously aired the supposed Tregelles contradiction. (Elsewhere in the present book I show that Tregelles did not contradict himself.)

After being flabbergasted by this blunder-packed sentence, I decided to check the accuracy of LaHaye’s reproduction of Margaret Macdonald’s key 1830 revelation, which appears in the back of his book as an appendix. This now-famous statement of hers had been included in several of my books, and I had aimed for 100 percent accuracy when copying 19th century historian Robert Norton’s initial publishing of it.

After my writings of the early 1970’s had seen the significance of Margaret’s monumental contribution, her handwritten account of her revelation had been discussed in some of the later works of R. A. Huebner, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, John L. Bray, Hal Lindsey, Thomas Ice, Gerald Stanton, and many others. Now it was LaHaye’s turn to record and analyze her.

With all 117 lines of her revelation in front of me (as found in my books including *The Incredible Cover-up* and *The Great Rapture Hoax*), I began comparing LaHaye’s version with it. Everything matched perfectly during the first few lines. But when I got to lines 10-11, LaHaye’s copy spoke of Margaret’s “great burst.” Was this a reference to the “inbreaking of God . . . about to burst on this earth” (lines 42-43)? Or perhaps her vision of the final collapse of the pretrib view? Well, neither. Between the words “great” and “burst” LaHaye had omitted “darkness and error about it; but suddenly what it was.” This omission can keep his readers in the dark concerning her cultic pride in thinking that only *she*

could really explain “the sign of the Son of man” (Matt.24:30)!

In lines 16-17 Margaret, referring to a secret (invisible-to-outsiders) prior rapture, wrote that “men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but ’tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people.” Here she viewed the “natural eye” as the *opposite* of the “eye of God.” At this point LaHaye omitted “eye; but ’tis spiritual discernment that is needed” and ran together “seen by the natural, the eye of God” — thus making the “natural” the *same as* the “eye of God”!

In addition to a variety of other copying errors, LaHaye also omitted a word in line 51, another word in line 58, 11 words in lines 74-75, nine words in lines 76-77, and eight words in lines 111-112 — sins of “omission” that can easily result in faulty analyses of Macdonald’s prophetic words! (I wrote LaHaye in regard to his many copying errors. He never responded.)

Was it possible that LaHaye’s incomplete version of Margaret’s key revelation was influenced by some earlier writer who had made the same copying errors? He gave no indication that he had obtained it from some modern source. I was confident that he couldn’t have copied any of my published reproductions.

LaHaye’s version is actually found in Robert Norton’s *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow* (1840). But somehow he had prefaced it as being part of Norton’s *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (1861). All I had to do was find someone who had carelessly combined the 1840 text with the 1861 title.

Within minutes, while going through my files, I ran across a 1989 publication that had the same combination. And it had the same copying errors — including the same 48 omitted words — in the same places! The author was Thomas Ice.²

Although Ice’s version had the glaring copying errors

²Thomas D. Ice, “The Origin of the Pretrib Rapture,” Part I (*Biblical Perspectives*, Jan./Feb., 1989), pp. 3-4.

appearing later on in LaHaye's version, and even though some Dallas Seminary professors had greater expertise in church history, Ice was the only one chosen to provide a full-length refutation of my origin research for Dallas Seminary's journal, the full-length title of which was the article's conclusion (in case readers didn't have time to read everything Ice had written!).³ Ice never responded after my letter to him asked about his many copying errors.

In case you're wondering right now if I've spent my decades of origin research looking for copying errors in others — well, I haven't. I had always given others the benefit of the doubt, assuming that they at least knew how to copy accurately when quoting various sources. One of the first things an infant learns is to imitate and copy even before he or she can speak or write or think logically. I had never even thought that my opponents could be deficient when copying — one of the simplest chores for a beginning writer!

If you were me, and if you had discovered what I've just outlined, do you think you'd want to examine other pretrib origin writings for such errors? If you would, then you know that no time was lost on my part. I took my fine-toothed comb and started going through R. A. Huebner's *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (1973); to my knowledge this was the first work faulting my findings on the origin.⁴

I counted 95 errors when Huebner was quoting others on its 81 pages. These included omitted words, added wording, and changed words. On page 36 he omitted ten words while quoting Darby. On page 42 he omitted four words while briefly quoting Brethren historian Harold Rowdon. (We will continue to see how miscopying can result in mistaken analyses and conclusions. I should add that all word omissions by

³Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Apr.-June, 1990), pp. 155-168.

⁴R. A. Huebner, *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (Millington, New Jersey: Present Truth Publishers, 1973).

Huebner and others being discussed in this appendix are *careless* omissions and not allowable ellipses marked by three or more spaced points.)

John Walvoord's *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (1976) showed unmistakable Huebner influence in its brief run-down of the pretrib origin.⁵ On page 43 he said that Huebner had been *carefully analyzing* various historical documents. Walvoord included four short quotes including three from Huebner and one from myself; his quotation had five copying errors which consisted of omitted words and changed wording. On page 45 while quoting the December 1831 issue of *The Morning Watch*, Irving's journal, Walvoord failed to italicize "the commencement of the seventh vial" which this British publication had emphasized in this manner; but Walvoord was merely copying Huebner who had also failed to do the same thing while copying this phrase!

Three years later Walvoord had a basic rewrite of the above in his revised edition of *The Rapture Question*.⁶ This time, while quoting Huebner only, he had seven copying errors including the changing of several words. He again failed to italicize the "seventh vial" phrase for the same reason.

Following in Walvoord's footsteps and showing the same Huebner influence was Charles Ryrie's *What You Should Know About the Rapture* (1981).⁷ In his four-page section on the birth of the pretrib doctrine I counted four copying errors.

In 1982 John Bray devoted about three dozen pages in a booklet to the origin of pretrib.⁸ He attempted to revive Duncan McDougall's earlier proposal that 18th century Jesuit priest Manuel Lacunza had been the first to teach the

⁵John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), pp. 42-48.

⁶John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question: Revised and Enlarged* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 151-155.

⁷Charles C. Ryrie, *What You Should Know About the Rapture* (Moody Press, 1981), pp. 69-72.

⁸John L. Bray, *The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching* (Lakeland, Florida: John L. Bray Ministry, 1982), pp. 1-34.

pretrib view. On page three he admitted that his short work was the result of only *two days* of research on his part at England's Oxford University.

I soon noted his flagrant misspelling: Robert Cameron's last name became "Aameron." Charles Erdman's last name was spelled "Eerdman." Seven times on page 25 the last name of H. A. Ironside appeared incorrectly as "Ironsidess." If readers aren't aware that Bray has misspelled Cameron, Erdman, and Ironside in the same way in more than one of his booklets, an innocent printer can easily be blamed.

Even more serious was Bray's inability to present error-free quotes from others, and in some instances his apparent unwillingness to credit his sources. In his booklet's 34-page discussion of the pretrib origin, I tallied a total of 69 copying errors, as follows: five when quoting Darby, five when quoting Irving, ten when quoting Margaret, 37 when quoting Lacunza (on whom he majored), and 12 when quoting others. These involved a total of 38 omitted words; on pages eight and ten he omitted 23 words from two Lacunza quotes, while on page 16 he omitted 15 words from an Irving quote.

Now a word about outside influence on Bray. Huebner (1973, p. 69), in order to assert that Margaret was a posttrib, isolated five phrases beginning in lines 37, 64, 72, 81, and 91 in her major revelation and then quoted them, in this order, in one paragraph. The same Bray booklet, in order to assert that Margaret was a posttrib (and with no reference to this Huebner work), used the same five phrases in two paragraphs on pages 20 and 21 — but in exactly *reverse* order! (A coincidence perhaps? Then think of the vast number of possible five-line combinations other than this one in this 117-line account, not to mention various phrases in the lines!)

For quite some time after his booklet was published, and while I was working on my *Hoax* book, Bray regularly swamped me with individual sheets containing his lengthy, typed *after-thoughts*, each with an instruction as to where in his booklet it should be inserted. At times I was receiving

several a week. It was apparent that he had more time to think about his work *after* its completion than before its completion!

The date set for *The Rapture*, by Hal Lindsey, was 1983. But I was hardly in a rapturous mood after I checked his six-page section on the origin.⁹ His “millions missing” promotion I didn’t mind as much as the missing accuracy in his version of Margaret’s vision which included four copying errors including missing wording.

Credit for my book *The Incredible Cover-up*, which Lindsey drew from, was also missing since footnote three in the same chapter was missing — *The Rapture*’s only missing footnote. I wrote both Lindsey and his New York publisher about this, but all remained quiet on the eastern as well as the western front. After some pressure, every eye was finally able to see footnote three’s unveiled “apocalypse” in Lindsey’s second printing.

John Bray’s 1985 booklet *The Second Coming of Christ and Related Events* included 12 pages focusing on Lacunza and Margaret.¹⁰ He had 17 errors while copying Lacunza including three errors consisting of nine omitted words. In one Lacunza quote he had seven missing words; his 1982 booklet had featured the same quote with the same omitted words. While copying Margaret’s key revelation Bray made 11 errors including four word changes.

Earlier we noted that Thomas Ice had somehow achieved seven errors adding up to 48 *omitted words* while airing his 1989 version of Margaret’s now-famous statement, and that Tim LaHaye’s 1992 reproduction of it had the same omissions in the same lines. I soon discovered that Ice’s version also had the same four distinctive errors appearing in Hal Lindsey’s 1983 published version, plus four others Ice

⁹Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (Bantam Books, 1983), pp. 169-174.

¹⁰John L. Bray, *The Second Coming of Christ and Related Events* (Lakeland, Florida: John L. Bray Ministry, 1985), pp. 18-24, 51-55.

had made which consisted of four word changes — a total of 15 copying errors when Ice had published what he called her “complete prophecy”! The same Ice issue quoted Bray for support much more than it quoted anyone else including Gary North, John Walvoord, R. A. Huebner, Ernest Sandeen, Timothy Weber, Richard Reiter, F. F. Bruce, and William Bell — and Ice had two copying errors when quoting Bray!¹¹

As already observed, when the Dallas Seminary journal *Bibliotheca Sacra* was willing to let someone challenge my origin research on its pages — someone able to maintain this journal’s level of scholarship when analyzing pretrib dispensationalism’s roots — it chose no Dallas Seminary professor but instead gave the honor to Thomas Ice, a pastor of a small Bible church in the Austin, Texas area.

Ice’s 14-page *Bib Sac* article, published in 1990, was basically a rewrite of what he had aired the previous year in his own *Biblical Perspectives* publication.¹² He had eight copying errors when quoting others: Margaret (2), Bray (3), Huebner (2), and Walvoord (1). His quotation again leaned heavily on Bray. When quoting selected lines in Margaret’s revelation, he had added wording and changed wording. Concerning the latter, he had her saying that “the Spirit must and will be purged out” — which, if she had actually written this, would be blasphemous; Ice had changed her original sentence which said: “The Spirit must and will be poured out.”¹³

Eighteen years after he issued *The Truth*, on which Walvoord, Ryrie, and other pretribs had long based their opposition to my conclusions, Brethren layman R. A. Huebner published his *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through*

¹¹Thomas D. Ice, “The Origin of the Pretrib Rapture,” Part I (*Biblical Perspectives*, Jan./Feb., 1989).

¹²Thomas D. Ice, “Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald” (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Apr.-June, 1990), pp. 155-168.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 160.

J. N. Darby (1991).¹⁴ Neither of these two Huebner works carried a copyright notice.

As I began going through *Precious Truths* I felt I was opening the lid of the ultimate in miscopy machines. My tabulation of Huebner's quotation mistakes in this 1991 book reached the grand (or not so grand) total of 257 copying errors! These included 53 omitted words, 41 changed words, and nine added words while quoting 19th century as well as 20th century writers.

In both of these books Huebner's primary aim has been to promote Darby as the first one in modern times to teach pretrib. At the same time he has sought to debunk what many have concluded since the 1830's: that either Irving or someone in his orbit should be credited with this end-time view.

Since these two books major on elevating Darby and demoting the Irvingite journal *The Morning Watch*, it isn't surprising to find Huebner extensively quoting both Darby and this British journal. The real surprise, considering the time he has obviously spent to uncover documents boosting Darby and bashing Darby's greatest competition, is to discover that his two greatest totals of copying errors (in both books) have to do with his quotation of these two sources!

In this regard, Huebner's 1991 book has 65 errors during just its quotation of various issues of *The Morning Watch*; these include omitted, added, and changed wording. When quoting Brethren leader Darby, he manages to come up with the astounding amount of 100 copying errors including 37 omitted words, 21 changed words, and two added words. In addition, I also counted 92 other errors he made in the same book while quoting other writers of the past two centuries, writers ranging from Robert Norton to Gary North.

You may be wondering how serious the copying mistakes are in this Huebner book. In his second section, under "Dispensational Truth," he writes that Darby "saw from Isaiah

¹⁴R. A. Huebner, *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby* (Morganville, New Jersey: Present Truth Publishers, 1991).

32 that there was a different dispensation coming.”¹⁵ He then quotes, for support, a letter Darby wrote in 1855. But right after the words “God’s behalf,” he somehow omits “that there was still an economy to come, of His ordering” — the support from Darby he was seeking in order to establish that Darby was embracing the premill view as early as 1827 (support needed for his additional claim that Darby then also held to the pretrib view)!

While quoting a key phrase in the March 1832 issue of *The Morning Watch*, Huebner subtracts three words and adds a word, thus reversing its meaning. The phrase: “after he shall have been met by his saints in the air.” The way it appears in this Huebner work: “after he shall have met the saints in the air.”¹⁶

What’s the difference? Just the difference between the posttrib view and the pretrib view! Prophecy books often have charts or diagrams of the two views. The chart showing what pretribs look for has the church going up; Christ meets the church in the air, He makes a U-turn, and then escorts the still upward church. The chart showing what posttribs wait for has Christ coming down; the church meets Christ in the air, the church makes a U-turn, and then escorts Him while He continues downward. With his misquotation here, Huebner changes the saints meeting Christ (the lesser always meets the greater) into Christ meeting the saints!

This same misquotation clashes with final conclusions in Huebner’s 1973 and 1991 titles. In both books he claims that *The Morning Watch* (published from 1829 to 1833) *never* taught a pretrib rapture. But at this point he has this Irvingite journal teaching in 1832 that when the rapture happens, the greater (Christ) will meet the lesser (the saints) — the action shown in a pretrib chart — and thus he somehow has the Irvingites teaching what he claims they were ignorant of

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 197.

at that time! (Elsewhere in the present book you will discover that Huebner, echoed by some of today's prophecy popularizers, has avoided *very clear* pretrib teaching in the same journal, teaching that Darby adopted *years* later!)

(A copy of Huebner's 1993 work on Darby's teachings recently came my way.¹⁷ Almost as soon as I began going through this book, I spotted an error he made while reproducing a short Darby quote — an omission of 31 words!¹⁸ I counted a total of 82 copying errors in this latest Huebner production which, like his previous offerings, continues to credit Darby for the pretrib idea.)

The same period of time also saw an expanded reprint of Gerald B. Stanton's 1956 book *Kept From the Hour* which includes several pages of discussion on the pretrib rapture origin.¹⁹ On three pages, while quoting Huebner, Walvoord, Ice, and myself, he makes nine copying mistakes including omitted words. In addition to these, he also repeats an error Huebner made while copying *The Morning Watch*.

In the early part of this appendix I revealed Tim LaHaye's errors while reproducing Margaret's epic revelation — 17 errors including 48 omitted words. (I also disclosed that three years earlier Thomas Ice had the same deleted words in the same places when he published the same revelation.) In addition to these "bumped" words, I tallied 84 other errors LaHaye makes when quoting various writers on 27 other pages discussing pretrib beginnings.²⁰

Can LaHaye's miscopying result in misinterpretation by

¹⁷R. A. Huebner, *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses* (Morganville, New Jersey: Present Truth Publishers, 1993).

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁹Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept From the Hour* (Miami Springs, Florida: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1991), pp. 326-331.

²⁰Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of the Storm*. The sources (and the times he miscopies them): Stanton (16), Walvoord (4), Huebner (21), Bray (8), Darby (3), Sandeen (1), Ice (31). He also repeats 21 copying errors made earlier by Stanton, Walvoord, Huebner, and Ice.

his readers? Here are examples of just two of his mistakes in copying:

LaHaye omits 11 words when quoting Walvoord's *The Rapture Question: Revised*. Walvoord, echoing Huebner, was asserting that my evidence has not proven that Margaret and Irving taught the pretrib view. But readers are kept in the dark about the assertion in the book in question because LaHaye somehow deletes what Walvoord was concluding!²¹

When quoting a short paragraph in Huebner's *Precious Truths*, again LaHaye has a sizable omission. What Huebner wrote: "G. North no longer needs to wait for Professor Hannah to show from original documents that D. MacPherson's thesis is false. Here G. North seems to mean that if D. MacPherson's thesis is false it 'is nothing but a sham.'"²²

From this quote LaHaye omits "Here G. North seems to mean that if D. MacPherson's thesis is false," changes the period after the first "false" into a semicolon, and then adds: "it 'is nothing but a sham.'" LaHaye's readers can think that Huebner concludes that my research is nothing but a sham. But the word "if" in LaHaye's deletion means that neither Huebner (at this point) nor North or Hannah has attached the word "sham" to my research — an example of how carelessness can turn serious historical study into a game of "Gossip"!

On page 169 LaHaye says that at the Library of Congress he obtained photocopies of Manuel Lacunza's work, the title of which is *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. Perhaps he can explain why on two pages this title appears as *The Coming of Messiah in Power and Glory* and is listed on a later page as *The Coming of Christ in Power and Great Glory*.²³ Equally serious are his book's other copying errors including erroneous sources and page numbering in footnotes as well as inaccurate historical dates in the text.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 123.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 126.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 168, 170; 207.

Before I end this appendix, let me add that I was able to check only *portions* of the above works for copying errors. Some of them had only a few pages on pretrib rapture history and so I had no need to go over unrelated quotes in the rest of their material. While Huebner's 1973 and 1991 titles did major on early pretrib development, still there were some very rare items he cited that couldn't be obtained through an inter-library loan system.

Since my checking was necessarily very incomplete, readers can easily assume, based on what is now revealed, that the *unchecked* parts of the above works most likely exhibit the same "comedy of errors."

Even flaws in punctuation can alter meanings. Years ago one of the items in Ripley's *Believe It or Not* told about a disaster that occurred because of a misplaced period in an emergency message!

We've already seen how missing words can result in wrong analyses and conclusions. Would you be upset if some future dictator wanted to eliminate just three words from the Bill of Rights' first amendment — words like "religion," "speech," and "press"?

Concerning the stunning percentage of words that some have deleted from Margaret's 1830 revelation, would you be concerned if the same percentage of words was deleted from your Bible?

In a recent article on today's Christian scholarship, Gary DeMar refers to "the usual poor scholarship that seems to be rampant in Christian circles," speaks of "poorly researched secondary sources," and then asks: "Is it any wonder that Christian scholarship is routinely scorned by the secularists of our day?"²⁴

And why should we expect our *political* leaders to be better than our Christian leaders?

²⁴Gary DeMar, "The Sorry State of Christian Scholarship," Part 2 (*Biblical Worldview*, April, 1993), pp. 6-7.

APPENDIX B

MACDONALD'S VISION

In the spring of 1830 in Port Glasgow, Scotland (a town on the south bank of the Clyde River about 15 miles west of the large city of Glasgow), a young woman by the name of Margaret Macdonald came up with a totally different end-time view. Privately she sent handwritten copies of it to Edward Irving and other clergymen. A medical doctor, Robert Norton, had been an eye-and-ear witness when she had explained her view to visitors in her home, and he recorded it at the time. Only after some in later years began assuming that Irving should get credit for the same novel view did Norton, a leading member of (and historian of) Irving's church, reproduce it in two of his books: *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow* (1840, pp. 171-176), and *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (1861, pp. 15-18, an abridgment that I have put in italics). Here is her monumental, Scripture-riddled statement — the earliest one I've found that has a coming of Christ before a future Antichrist or future Tribulation:

It was first the awful state of the land that was pressed upon me. I saw the blindness and infatuation of the people to be very great. I felt the cry of Liberty just to be the hiss of the serpent, to drown them in perdition. It was just 'no God.' I repeated the words, Now there is distress of nations, with perplexity, the seas and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear — now look out for the sign of the Son of man. Here I was made to stop and cry out, O it is not known what the sign of the Son of man is; the people of God think they are

waiting, but they know not what it is. *I felt this needed to be revealed, and that there was great darkness and error about it; but suddenly what it was burst upon me with a glorious light. I saw it was just the Lord himself descending from Heaven with a shout, just the glorified man, even Jesus; but that all must, as Stephen was, be filled with the Holy Ghost, that they might look up, and see the brightness of the Father's glory. I saw the error to be, that men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people. Many passages were revealed, in a light in which I had not before seen them. I repeated, 'Now is the kingdom of Heaven like unto ten virgins, who went forth to meet the Bridegroom, five wise and five foolish; they that were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them; but they that were wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.'* 'But be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; and be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.' This was the oil the wise virgins took in their vessels — this is the light to be kept burning — the light of God — that we may discern that which cometh not with observation to the natural eye. Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his appearance. No need to follow them who say, see here, or see there, for his day shall be as the lightning to those in whom the living Christ is. 'Tis Christ in us that will lift us up — he is the light — 'tis only those that are alive in him that will be caught up to meet him in the air. I saw that we must be in the Spirit, that we might see spiritual things. John was in the Spirit, when he saw a throne set in Heaven. — But I saw that the glory of the ministration of the Spirit had not been known. I repeated frequently, but the spiritual temple must and shall be reared, and the fulness of Christ be poured into his body, and then shall we be caught up to meet him. Oh none will be counted worthy of this calling but his body, which is the church, and which must be a candlestick all of gold. I often said, Oh the glorious inbreaking of God which is now about to burst on this earth; Oh the glorious temple which is now about to be reared, the bride adorned for her husband; and Oh what a holy, holy bride she must be, to be prepared for such a glorious bridegroom. I said, Now shall the people of God have to do with realities — now shall the glorious mystery of God in our nature be known — now shall it be known what it is for man to be glorified. I felt that the revelation of Jesus Christ had yet to be opened up — it is not knowledge about God that it contains, but it is an entering into God — I saw that there was a glorious breaking in of God to be. I felt as Elijah, surrounded with chariots of fire. I saw as it were, the spiritual temple reared, and the Head Stone brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace, unto it. It was a glorious light above the brightness of the sun, that shone round about me. I felt that those who

were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and feel walking in the midst of them, while those who had not the Spirit could see nothing — so that two shall be in one bed, the one taken and the other left, because the one has the light of God within while the other cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven. I saw the people of God in an awfully dangerous situation, surrounded by nets and entanglements, about to be tried, and many about to be deceived and fall. Now will THE WICKED be revealed, with all power and signs and lying wonders, so that if it were possible the very elect will be deceived. — This is the fiery trial which is to try us. — It will be for the purging and purifying of the real members of the body of Jesus; but Oh it will be a fiery trial. Every soul will be shaken to the very centre. The enemy will try to shake in every thing we have believed — but the trial of real faith will be found to honour and praise and glory. Nothing but what is of God will stand. The stony-ground hearers will be made manifest — the love of many will wax cold. I frequently said that night, and often since, now shall the awful sight of a false Christ be seen on this earth, and nothing but the living Christ in us can detect this awful attempt of the enemy to deceive — for it is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness he will work — he will have a counterpart for every part of God's truth, and an imitation for every work of the Spirit. The Spirit must and will be poured out on the church, that she may be purified and filled with God — and just in proportion as the Spirit of God works, so will he — when our Lord anoints men with power, so will he. This is particularly the nature of the trial, through which those are to pass who will be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man. There will be outward trial too, but 'tis principally temptation. It is brought on by the outpouring of the Spirit, and will just increase in proportion as the Spirit is poured out. The trial of the Church is from Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept. I frequently said, Oh be filled with the Spirit — have the light of God in you, that you may detect satan — be full of eyes within — be clay in the hands of the potter — submit to be filled, filled with God. This will build the temple. It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. This will fit us to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. I saw it to be the will of God that all should be filled. But what hindered the real life of God from being received by his people, was their turning from Jesus, who is the way to the Father. They were not entering in by the door. For he is faithful who hath said, by me if any man enter in he shall find pasture. They were passing the cross, through which every drop of the Spirit of God flows to us. All power that comes not through the blood of Christ is not of God. When I say, they are looking from the cross, I feel that there is much in it — they turn from the blood of the Lamb, by which we overcome, and in which our robes are washed

and made white. There are low views of God's holiness, and a ceasing to condemn sin in the flesh, and a looking from him who humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation. *Oh! it is needed, much needed at present, a leading back to the cross. I saw that night, and often since, that there will be an outpouring of the Spirit on the body, such as has not been, a baptism of fire, that all the dross may be put away.* Oh there must and will be such an indwelling of the living God as has not been — *the servants of God sealed in their foreheads* — great conformity to Jesus — *his holy holy image seen in his people* — just *the bride made comely, by his comeliness put upon her.* This is what we are at present made to pray much for, that speedily we may all be made ready to meet our Lord in the air — and it will be. *Jesus wants his bride. His desire is toward us. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Amen and Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Since Norton was the chronicler of Margaret's view, his interpretation of her is valuable.

R. A. Huebner (*Precious Truths*, 1991, p. 162) has three brief quotes from Norton's first (1839) work that expressed only the *posttrib* aspect of his own early partial rapturism; Huebner thus gives the misleading impression that since Norton was reflecting Margaret's partial rapturism, she was basically a *posttrib*. (We've noted in the present book that since 1830 partial rapturism has contained *pretrib* as well as *posttrib* aspects; *part* of the "church" is caught up before the tribulation, while the rest of the "church" is left on earth.)

What Huebner omitted: in the same 1839 book (p. 278) Norton wrote that "Christ will reveal himself to his church" *before* He comes as "Judge" (the *prior* aspect in Norton's — and Margaret's — view that cancels out Huebner's assertion)!

Huebner also swerved around Norton's page 395 on which Norton revealed, concerning the "prophetic manifestations which I here advocate," that "the daily and hourly observation of successive years" has "only confirmed my original conviction that they have been of God."

After including her statement in his 1840 book, Norton included it again in his 1861 book and explained the view about which he'd never had any doubts. In the very first

paragraph in the same book, he stated that Irvingism's "true origin" had been "hidden and misrepresented" and that Irving had merely been "the first minister who publicly recognised it" — this in the same chapter in which he claimed that Margaret's view was the "first" instance, as he put it, of such teaching.

Since his 1861 work credited Margaret with what he had held since 1830, how did the same book explain his — and her — view? On pages 149-50, he spoke of "the fearful 'hour of temptation' — which the Church must pass through after the gathering and presenting before God of the first ripe sheaf . . . when Laodicea shall learn and acknowledge how loved of the Lord was the Philadelphia she despised, because of her 'little strength.'"

We've noted, in the chapter on Margaret, that the first deviation from the historic one-stage coming view was an early form of partial rapturism, in a basically posttrib setting, that saw a prior "first-fruits" (explained by Irving as a ripe "sheaf") caught up before other "Church" members.

What about Norton's "hour of temptation" phrase? Several pages later (p. 155), while writing about the time of "temptation" he hoped he would miss, he said that his hope was "to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air" before "the great tribulation" which will be "coming upon the earth."

We've also noted that other leading Irvingites visited Margaret in mid-1830 and that as early as September of the same year, "Fidus" in *The Morning Watch* taught that "Philadelphia" (and not "Laodicea") will be raptured before "the great tribulation." (In the previous June issue, before any writers for this journal had visited Margaret, "Fidus" had written just the opposite: that both Philadelphia and Laodicea will remain on earth until the final Advent!)

Norton in 1861 also commented (p. 176) about "the yet future persecution of the Jews by Antichrist, after the translation," adding (pp. 184-5) that "the translation of the saints spoken of in 1 Corinth. xv. and 1 Thess. iv. is a progressive

work” and that “the first fruits . . . will be first taken away . . . before . . . the great tribulation.”

Norton’s conclusion about Margaret rested on her main point which appears halfway through her account: “the one taken and the other left” before “THE WICKED” (Antichrist) is “revealed.” Since 1975 my writings have also viewed this placement as the point she was making. (When Hal Lindsey’s books use the same phrases in the same sequence, everyone knows that he’s expressing the *pretrib* view.)

Although Margaret had been under historicism’s influence, her usage of “will” and “shall” when discussing the Antichrist shows that she held to a future tribulation; nowhere did she refer to the Catholic papacy as “Antichrist” or say that her tribulation would be only the *final form* of what had previously happened. So we see that she did indeed qualify as a pretribulation rapture teacher.

As long ago as 1974 *The Witness*, the oldest and largest (Darbyist) Brethren magazine in England, stated in a published review of my origin evidence that it “succeeds in establishing that the view outlined was first stated by a certain Margaret Macdonald.” Can anyone interpret the British more capably than the British themselves can?

Well, in recent years some pretrib dispensationalists in America have thought so. In his 1976 and 1979 books while analyzing my research, John Walvoord interpreted Margaret’s main point by completely ignoring the entire revelation containing it!

And in 1990 in the Dallas Seminary journal while giving the illusion that he was facing the thrust of her statement head-on, dispensationalism defender Thomas Ice, during his extensive quotation of her, stopped in his quotation three lines short of her main point, quoted nothing in the lines exhibiting it, and then resumed quoting nine lines later!

If she really didn’t teach a rapture before a future tribulation, as Ice and his friends assert, why have many of today’s leading dispensationalists been afraid to simply quote the six

lines (the “secret six”?) housing Margaret’s main point?

Huebner’s *Precious Truths* (pp. 160-63) desperately claims that when Norton again reproduced Margaret’s statement in 1861, he “suppressed” portions that had been included in his 1840 version — portions that would make her sound like a posttrib. But Huebner’s deviousness really shines through; he’s aware that Norton’s 1861 book had only an abridgment, that nothing essential was deleted, and that in both reproductions *Margaret’s main point was kept intact!* (Huebner himself, when reproducing Kelly’s “The Rapture of the Saints” etc. in 1991, deletes 40 lines while abridging what he’d included in 1973 — and no one has viewed this as something sinister!)

All of the pretrib dispensationalists of the present time that I have discussed herein have also ignored the fact that throughout the latter part of the 1800’s, the leading scholars dealing with dispensationalism’s roots — Brethren as well as non-Brethren — repeatedly credited Irvingite territory — and not Darbyist territory — with the pretrib rapture idea.

The same earlier scholars, while emphasizing Irving’s development more than Margaret’s origination, nevertheless were aware of the early Irvingite sources that did in fact pinpoint Scotland as the region deserving credit and Margaret Macdonald as the individual deserving the same. It’s noteworthy that not a single one of them, to my knowledge, ever even *questioned* any early Irvingite source whenever it credited Margaret as the originator of the view in question!

(Because of space and time limitations, sources for this appendix and the ones that follow have not been placed in separate footnote sections.)

APPENDIX C

IRVING'S JOURNAL

Since Edward Irving's quarterly journal of prophecy *The Morning Watch* (published from 1829 to 1833) was the best reflector of prophetic development before and after Margaret's epic "discovery," let me briefly outline this journal's progress during that brief period. (In parentheses I'll also show John Darby's development at the same time.)

Earlier in the present book, in the chapter on Margaret (pp. 28ff), it was shown that the earliest deviation from the historic one-stage coming outlook was a tiny-gap partial rapturism based primarily on Leviticus 23's order of feasts. During 1829 this journal's issues portrayed this development.

(In his 1829 work, as noted, Darby looked for only the Revelation 19 coming which he placed *after* non-imminent, intervening events.)

Now note the incredible changes on the pages of *The Morning Watch* (which I'll shorten to *TMW*) throughout the monumental year of 1830:

TMW (Mar., pp. 158-9): Irving wrote that the "translation of the saints taketh place . . . before the judgments which fall upon the earth at the coming of the Son of Man" and "just before the great consummation of wrath" — a posttrib coming.

TMW (June, p. 278): An unidentified writer expressed the one-stage coming he looked for like this: "the day of the Lord's second advent, 1 Thess. iv." — posttrib.

TMW (June, p. 367): A writer listed only as “S” said that “St. Paul warns the Thessalonian converts against expecting an instantaneous return, foretelling the previous rising of the man of sin” — posttrib again.

During July and August of 1830, several writers for this journal visited Margaret. She explained to them the new view she had come to several months earlier, and the very next issue of *The Morning Watch* began to reflect the incredible change in doctrine from posttrib to pretrib in accordance with Margaret’s vision!

TMW (Sep., pp. 510-514): “Fidus,” as noted, saw “Philadelphia” raptured *before* “the great tribulation” — pure pretrib.

I will now quote extensively from the Fidus article in the September issue of *TMW* so that the reader may see firsthand how Fidus approaches this doctrinal change. On page 510 Fidus briefly describes the seven churches (Rev. 2, 3) as representing seven periods of time. All seven of these I have previously quoted in Chapter 1 (p. 9). But now, in the following extended quote, I will repeat items six and seven because of their relevancy to the new pretrib doctrine. Also, the words and phrases that are most poignant to the new doctrine are highlighted in bold type:

6. The Philadelphian church expresses the period of that preparation, until **the Lord come to the air, and be met by his saints changed and risen.**

7. The Laodicean church (the only one yet entirely future) is our sad monitor concerning the history of the church on earth **during that period of great tribulation which shall intervene between the coming of the Lord to the air and the establishment of his throne and rest in Zion.** [p. 510]

The remainder of page 510, all of pages 511, 512, and down to near the end of page 513 are devoted to a historical discussion of the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis. Then in the discussion of the remaining two, Philadelphia and Laodicea, Fidus returns to the is-

sue of a partial pretrib rapture as follows:

Philadelphia expresses *brotherly love*, whether between those who had or between those who had not been previously brethren. Accordingly, it represents that era, so often spoken of throughout the epistles, when **they that look for the Lord** shall, in the midst of the strife and selfishness of the last days, be knit together, by their common faith and hope, **in the bonds of his mystical body, in the unity of the Holy Ghost**; and, especially, when those Jews who shall be darkly yet honestly awaiting Messiah, the King and Salvation of Israel, shall have sympathy and fellowship with such Gentiles as shall have not turned unto fables, but kept God's word, and expected the Lord to execute in truth his yet-pending word of prophecy. . . . [pp. 513-14]

Then follows a brief historical discussion of the city of Philadelphia after which Fidus continues thus:

And, what is very remarkable, [Philadelphia] now bears the name Allah Shehr, *The city of God*. Now its antitype is the church in that period which succeeds the great earthquake of the French Revolution (Rev. xi. 13); which is characterized by the earnest yet patient **expectation of the Lord; which receives the answer of its faith in being caught up to meet him; which is thus kept from the hour of temptation; and which so becomes, not Laodicea chastised in love, but the victorious ministerer of the great tribulation** (Rev. ii. 24, 26; iii. 10; Luke xxi. 36; Heb. xi. 5).

Laodicea means the *righteousness of the people* — or, in other words, designates a people sufficient in themselves; which think they have attained; and, like God's Jewish church of old, at the very moment when he was about to give them over to Babylon, gladly hear and blindly say "The temple of the Lord are we" (Jer. ii. 35; vii. 4). How this character befits the era thus indicated does not yet appear, for the era is future; but how it accords with the rest of the words of the Spirit concerning that era, will abundantly appear; and these words shall come to pass. . . . [p. 514]

Again, Fidus gives a historical description of Laodicea and continues as follows:

In all these features we see fearfully indicated the last and dying stage of the Gentile church, before the gathering of the Jews shall give it life from the dead (Rom. xi. 15): we see the imminency, the terrors, the earthquake convulsions of **the great tribulation**; the

ungodly league with the world; the blind plea of a fancied innocence (Jer. ii. 35); the self-complacent and God-denying refusal to repent, save in those who shall become zealous; and the ultimate ejection of rich yet poor professors (Rev. xvi. 18), as intolerable in the sight of Jacob's mighty God, then to be revealed as the Searcher of hearts (Rev. ii. 23). [p. 514]

Now, it is obvious to anyone that Fidus taught that the faithful saints in the Philadelphia church period were raptured prior to "the great tribulation" but that the unfaithful Laodicea went through the tribulation. The case is made, and there should be no more equivocation about it by the dispensationalists.

Meanwhile, Darby, as seen in his December 1830 work, previously analyzed (p. 99f), was still looking for only the posttrib Revelation 19 coming.

We've also seen (p. 74) that in June 1831 (*TMW*, pp. 301-2) Irving's basis for a rapture before the final 1260 days was Revelation 12's "man child."

For 30 years this was also Darby's basis for a rapture before the same 1260 days. Darby, aware that Irving had been first, waited until 1839 to begin teaching this — and never gave Irving credit.

Later writers who mentioned *The Morning Watch* in their works included Robert Baxter (1833), Margaret Oliphant (1865), and Edward Miller (1878).

If these influential writers had compared this journal with Darby's earliest works (as this present book has done), William Kelly might never have dared to engineer his origin revisionism between 1889 and 1903 — which allowed unsuspecting 20th century pretribs to claim a "respectable" background for their view. As long as 19th century experts hadn't been prevented from airing the *real* facts about pretrib beginnings, this novel view had been confined to two of the tiniest and most eccentric British sects!

The continuing 20th century cover-up of Irvingism's prophetic views has had a disastrous side effect. It has kept

“cult watchers” from realizing that several key “cults” that arose during the 1800’s were greatly influenced by some of Irvingism’s other aberrations (see the end of Chapter 3, “Irving and Friends”). Kelly and others have detoured scholars away from this valuable data (which allowed some “cults” to claim originality they never deserved) simply because they’ve wanted to hide the source from which Darby pirated his most “novel” prophetic elements!

APPENDIX D

BAXTER'S VIEW

Robert Baxter was an early Irvingite who later left Irvingism and wrote his *Narrative of Facts* etc. (1833) which exposed that system. In his book he revealed his journey from posttrib to pretrib and finally back to posttrib.

On page 17 Baxter wrote:

An opinion had been advanced in some of Mr. Irving's writings, that before the second coming of Christ, and before the setting in upon the world of the *day of vengeance*, emphatically so called in the Scriptures, the saints would be caught up to heaven like Enoch and Elijah; and would be thus saved from the destruction of this world, as Noah was saved in the ark, and as Lot was saved from Sodom. This was an opinion I never could entertain; conceiving, as I did, that our refuge in and through the days of vengeance, would be some earthly sanctuary, until the Lord should come, the dead be raised, and those remaining alive should be caught up. (1 Thess. iv. 17.)

In the next sentence he said: "... I did, however, experience a sudden change of opinion" He then quoted the "taken" verses (Matt. 24: 40, 41) and the "worthy to escape" verse (Luke 21: 36).

On page 18 Baxter added: "This escape is from the days of vengeance" On the same page he revealed a personal prophecy he had in January of 1832: "The words of the prophecy were most distinct, to count from that day (viz. 14th January, 1832,) 1260 days, and three days and a half; (Rev. xi. 11.)" On the previous page he had written that these 1260 days were "the days appointed for testimony, at the end of

which the saints of the Lord should go up to meet the Lord in the air, and evermore be with the Lord."

His date-setting scheme, then, was this: 1260 days of "testimony" ending at a rapture symbolized by Rev. 11's two martyred witnesses who, in verses 11 and 12, were resurrected and "ascended up to heaven."

On page 31 Baxter declared that God would

take away his Spirit and his church altogether from the earth, by causing his faithful spiritual church to be caught up to heaven like Elijah; and the earth being then without a witness for God, Satan should take to himself the sovereignty, and stand forth in all hideous power in the person of one man, to receive the worship of all the earth: — that this in particular and in fulness was the *man of sin, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

R. A. Huebner's *Precious Truths* (p. 199) watered down "caught up" to only "removed," while William Kelly's anti-Irvingism series (*The Bible Treasury*, Feb., 1889, p. 222) skipped over what I've just quoted even though he quoted lines shortly before and after on pages 30 and 31!

On page 77 Baxter saw the Irvingites as the fulfillment of witnesses "in the 11th chapter of Revelations" [sic], adding in the same sentence: "I was called of God a spiritual minister, and was thus one of the witnesses . . ."

On page 78 he wrote that the "witnesses, or spiritual prophets and ministers" would "ascend up to heaven (as is contained in Rev. xi.); fulfilling, in their being accompanied by the saints, the prophecy of the translation of the saints in three years and a half." He thus equated his "days of vengeance" with the final 1260 days of Revelation 12 which follow Revelation 11.

Huebner (1973, 1991) and Kelly (March, 1889, p. 234) — both of whom have consistently covered up Irvingism in order to credit Darby — ignored this last Baxter statement; Kelly even quoted lines before and after on pages 77 and 80!

While discussing what "is now our state" (p. 113), Baxter

revealed on the next page the view he finally returned to: “. . . we shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory — descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

All agree that Darby was teaching pretrib after 1839 when his basis was the Revelation 12:5 “man child” that is raptured before the final 1260 days — the only tribulation futurism held to during its revival then.

Since Baxter’s rapture was based on an even *earlier* symbol, he was clearly a pretrib when he was part of Irving’s group.

APPENDIX E

THE CLAIM GAME

Shortly after Millennium III Publishers told me on the phone on March 16, 1995 that it wanted to publish *The Rapture Plot*, Evangelist John L. Bray (Post Office Box 90129, Lakeland, FL 33804) told me in a letter that he had recent evidence that pretrib rapturism was taught in a 1788 book.

At about the same time I learned that Thomas Ice (Pre-Trib Research Center, 370 L'Enfant Promenade S.W., Suite 801, Washington, DC 20024) was claiming that pretrib had lately been found in an early source known as Pseudo-Ephraem, whose writings are generally placed somewhere between 374 and 627 A.D.

("Pseudo" — which means "false" — when placed before someone's name can indicate that someone else — perhaps a loyal but careless copyist or even a hostile revisionist who wanted to change an original author's words — was the real author. Incidentally, was William Kelly trying to create a Pseudo-Irving?)

Morgan Edwards

First, let's examine Bray's claim. Before we look at it, let me say that I've appreciated Bray the preacher far more than I've been able to appreciate Bray the researcher, even though he's been thoughtful in sharing his findings with me. In an appendix in my book *The Great Rapture Hoax*, I was

forced to disagree with his defense of Manuel de Lacunza as the pretrib originator. Lacunza looked for only the Revelation 19 coming which could happen only after the tribulation days were “concluded,” as Lacunza put it. Bray also overlooked the fact that Lacunza compared his “much before” expression with the then prevalent Catholic gap of only “a few minutes” between the catching up and the touchdown in Jerusalem; a day or even an hour would be “much before” when compared with such a gap. And Lacunza repeatedly equated I Thessalonians 4’s coming with Matthew 24’s coming.

Bray’s new claim for pretrib fame is Morgan Edwards, a British pastor who moved to America in 1761. His 1788 book containing only 56 numbered pages was entitled *Two Academical Exercises on Subjects Bearing the Following Titles; Millennium, Last-Novelties*. Before I obtained photocopies of every page in it from Southern Baptist Seminary, Bray had sent me copies of several pages and also the first advance copy of the booklet of his that analyzes his new claim.

Edwards wrote (p. 7): “. . . the dead saints will be raised, and the living changed at Christ’s ‘appearing in the air’ (I Thes. iv, 17); and this will be about three years and a half before the *millennium*. . . .” (Bray changes “appearing” to “coming.”)

It was obvious from just the few photocopies Bray sent me that Edwards was a historicist (and not a futurist, as Bray claims in his booklet, p. 3). After noting Bray’s many copying errors when quoting Edwards (including changed and omitted wording), I observed that on page 19 Edwards wrote that “the ministry of the witnesses” of Revelation 11 “requires many more years to perform than the time of their wearing sackcloth; and there are no more than about 204 years between now and their death: I should therefore expect that their appearance is not *far off*” (emphasis mine).

Bray skips past this historicist statement and quotes Edwards’ very next sentence (and somehow deletes the word “during”): “. . . the two witnesses and Antichrist will be in

Jerusalem during the said 42 months. . . ." (Bray sees these as literal months which can also be viewed as three and a half literal years or 1260 literal days.)

Since it's impossible to divide a couple centuries, or even one century, into a literal 1260-*day* period featuring Revelation 11's two witnesses (who prophesy 1260 "days"), it's obvious that Edwards interpreted these 1260 days as *years*.

On page 34 Edwards said that there are no more than "208" years before "the commencement of the millennium." Concerning this lengthy period, Edwards added: "Time little enough to bring forth the events we have already mentioned, viz. the destruction of the Ottoman empire; the restoration of the Jews, and their rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple; the exploits of Antichrist towards the mastery of the world, &c. Therefore we may expect soon to see the *fig tree budding and putting forth* its leaves."

Bray avoids all of this historicist interpretation and quotes Edwards' very next sentence (on another matter). And there's additional historicism that Bray omits:

On page 14 Edwards referred to the "*Turkish* or *Ottoman* empire" and described the "Turk" as the "beast that started out of the earth" — his interpretation of Revelation 13:11. But Edwards was merely echoing what had long been projected.

For example, in his 1708 *Dissertation* etc., American theologian Increase Mather wrote (p. 93): "It is said of the Turkish Empire, That it is prepared for an Hour, and a Day, and a Month, and a Year; Which according to the Prophetical account, is Three Hundred Ninety Six Years" — how he viewed Revelation 9:15. On the next page Mather included this common historicist "key": "An Hour, in the Prophetical Style, is Fifteen Days: A Day, is a Year: A Month, is Thirty Years: A Prophetical Year, is Three Hundred Sixty Five Years."

If Edwards needed 208 more years for items like the *destruction* of the Turkish Empire (an empire seen as Revelation 13's second beast) and the *final form* of Antichrist, it's

apparent that he felt that much, if not most, of his 1260-year tribulation had already been fulfilled!

On page 20 Edwards defined "Antichrist" in this way: "I take him for the last of them, who have plagued the world under the names of *Popes*; for Antichrist is to be destroyed at Christ's coming to reign (2 Thess. ii. 8.); and popery will last till then; and will become universal and incontrollable, and therefore more cruel than ever. . . ." Referring to II Thessalonians 2:4, Edwards stated: "Then, and not till then will that wicked one be *revealed* who has hitherto assumed no higher title than 'the vicar general of Christ on earth;' but then off goes the mask." Note that Edwards' Antichrist had "hitherto" (for centuries) been in existence!

Edwards' basis for holding to a rapture three and a half years before the second advent (and a future millennium) may well have been the Revelation 11 witnesses on whom he focused. This chapter has a period of three and a half days (verses 9, 11) that historicism can view as three and a half *years*. Since the spirits of these dead witnesses conceivably go to be with Christ during the same days — days preceding the final advent — historicist Edwards could see in this symbol a rapture three and a half *years* before the same advent.

Since Edwards' book was actually written in the 1740's in England, let's see if the historicism of that period could derive *years* from the same three and a half days. The June, 1830 issue of *The Morning Watch* reprinted a November 29, 1755 letter that John Fletcher sent to a famous preacher, John Wesley. Fletcher said that the "last raging" of the centuries-long Antichrist will last only three and a half literal years, adding: "Those that shall escape, being hidden and saved in a wonderful manner, will be the seed of that harvest, and will remain concealed three years and a half (see Rev. xi. the death and resurrection of the two witnesses). . . ."

Whereas Fletcher (while viewing Revelation 11:9, 11) saw church members concealed *on* earth for three and a half years, Edwards saw church members concealed *away from*

earth via prior rapture. Edwards' scheme of a rapture three and a half years before the end of a *1260-year* tribulation has the same tiny gap¹ a futurist would have if he were to teach a rapture three and a half *days* before the end of a *1260-day* tribulation! Since such a futurist view would be seen as a *posttrib* view, Edwards (who had the same small percentage) should be classified as a historicist *posttrib*!

Pseudo-Ephraem

Now let's examine the Grant Jeffrey/Timothy Demy/Thomas Ice claim that someone known as Pseudo-Ephraem clearly taught a pretrib rapture more than 1000 years ago. (The dates of the *real* Ephraem, a Catholic known as Ephraem the Syrian, are 306-373.) Ice has given me an advance copy of an article he and Demy have written which will appear in the July-September 1995 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Dallas Seminary's journal.

This article names Jeffrey as the one who launched this claim. While going through Paul J. Alexander's *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (1985), which translates into English what writers of the early Middle Ages taught about the end-times, Jeffrey found what appears to be pretrib in Pseudo-Ephraem.

First a word about Jeffrey. He is a best-selling author who seems to have the same personal incentive that Ice and some others have to either ignore or twist the development of the 1830's. Alternatively, if they are forced to admit that Irving and his friends did indeed precede Darby, they attempt to find pretrib before the 1830's.

We've previously noted how current dispensationalist scholarship avoids pre-Darby pretrib statements; e.g., Tim

¹Edwards saw a rapture at the extreme end of the tribulation. The mathematics works out as follows: 3.5 years/1260 years=0.0027, or 0.27% of the tribulation remaining. That means 99.73% of the tribulation was already past before the rapture. Hardly a pretrib rapture!

LaHaye deleted the same 48 words from Margaret's brief account that Ice deleted years earlier, plus Ice deliberately detoured around Margaret's main point in his previous *Bib Sac* article. We've also seen Jeffrey's *Apocalypse* confusing "1820" with "1830," letting Lactantius write with the pen name of "Victorinus," and (even worse) chopping off a *Didache* quote that had already been marked with Walvoord's, Stanton's, and Pentecost's "guideline."

Jeffrey's *Heaven . . . The Last Frontier* (1990) has several glaring errors on page 36; he claims that in 1825 a preacher in Scotland named John Darby had *detailed* rapture development and that the word "rapture" was coined then. Facts: even R. A. Huebner would agree that in 1825 Darby was a *posttrib* in *Ireland*, that Darby had *no* pretrib development then, and that this term was used *long before* 1825! (I thought it wise to highlight some of the "Grant" Ice and his friends have received for their research.)

The case for Pseudo-Ephraem rests on the following citations from this Medieval writer, translated from Latin, that Ice's group featured in advance publicity long before the *Bib Sac* article:

1. "Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of the Lord Christ, so that he may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world?"

2. "For all the saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins."

While Demy and Ice note "draw" in the first quote, they rest their case on "gathered" and "taken" in the second quote. (Pretribs have long spotted their own rapture in II Thessalonians 2:1's "gathering" and Matthew 24:40's "taken" — even though Walvoord's books maintain that pretrib is *not* found in Matthew 24.)

Oné can find a pretrib rapture in Pseudo-Ephraem (an

early Catholic writer) only if one insists upon:

1. Ignoring or twisting Pseudo-Ephraem's explanation of the above quotes, and

2. Ignoring or twisting the interpretation given by Pseudo-Ephraem expert Paul Alexander, the author Demy and Ice quote selectively.

Ice's pretrib research group has been circulating the 10 sections of this early writer's sermon. The two key quotes are in Section 2. Sections 3 through 9 describe wars, natural disasters, the arrival of Antichrist, the great tribulation, and the appearance of the two witnesses (Enoch and Elijah). Section 10 describes the final advent of Christ.

And where is the Christian church during all of this?

The "brothers" Pseudo-Ephraem addresses his sermon to in Section 1 are the "brothers" (Section 2) who expect the arrival of Antichrist and "do penance."

In Section 2, after saying that many end-time signs have already been fulfilled, the writer declares that only one thing is "imminent": "the advent of the wicked one" (Antichrist). He says that in light of "the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of *our* sins" (emphasis mine), "we at least stand in need of penance for our actions!"

In Section 3 some of the Christians become part of an end-time apostasy ("a brother" will "not be grieved" for "a brother"). In Section 4 we see gathered Christians fleeing from the wicked. During the tribulation (Sections 5 through 9) Christians in wilderness areas "bend their knees to God," are "sustained by the salvation of the Lord," and God sends "Enoch and Elijah" who "call back the faithful witnesses to God" (witnesses who, in a sense, are "taken" back to the Lord in order to be freed from Antichrist's "seduction") "so that they may be found good by their Lord" when the final advent occurs. After the tribulation Christians are still on earth when the second coming arrives.

So we see that Christians are "gathered" away from the wicked in *earthly* settings before the tribulation and then are

“taken” closer to the Lord when the tribulation intensifies.

At the end of their mid-1995 *Bib Sac* article, Demy/Ice conclude that Pseudo-Ephraem “clearly emphasizes imminence” and “two comings separated by the tribulation” — in other words, an imminent pretrib coming featuring a pretrib rapture. Let me now present the claims they’ve been making in regard to Pseudo-Ephraem (which I’ll shorten to P-E) and my responses to them:

Claim No. 1: P-E teaches the “imminence” of a pretrib rapture.

Response No. 1: As noted, the only “imminent” event P-E expects is the arrival of the Antichrist!

Claim No. 2: P-E teaches “two comings,” the first of which is a pretrib coming.

Response No. 2: In the before-the-tribulation sections in his sermon, P-E mentions neither a descent of Christ, nor a shout, nor an angelic voice, nor a trumpet of God, nor a resurrection, nor any mention of air. He sees no coming of Christ before the tribulation. The only coming of Christ he waits for is the *non-imminent* final advent which, in Section 2, he ties to “the end of the world” and to “the harvest” and “angels” who “hold sickles in their hands” (Rev. 14:14-19)!

In his last section (10), P-E writes that after “the sign of the Son of Man” when “the Lord shall appear with great power,” the “angelic trumpet precedes him, which shall sound and declare: Arise, O sleeping ones, arise, meet Christ, because his hour of judgment has come!” And then “the righteous ones shall inherit everlasting life with the Lord forever and ever.”

When summarizing what I’ve just quoted (P-E harmonizing I Thessalonians 4’s aspects with Matthew 24’s coming), Demy/Ice commit their worst revisionism (they avoid what P-E includes between “trumpet” and “judgment”) and give their readers this misleading condensation:

“A trumpet will sound, calling forth the dead to judgment.”

By changing “the angelic trumpet” which precedes the resurrection of “sleeping ones” (“the trump of God” in I Thessalonians 4 when “the dead in Christ shall rise”) to merely “a trumpet” (the expression in Matthew 24:31), and by changing the “sleeping ones” who “arise” and “meet Christ” (“the dead in Christ” who “rise” and are “caught up” to “meet the Lord in the air”) to merely “the dead” who face “judgment,” Demy and Ice give the false impression that Pseudo-Ephraem didn’t place the rapture after the tribulation but before it and was therefore a pretrib rapturist!

Claim No. 3: P-E expert “Paul Alexander clearly believed that Pseudo-Ephraem was teaching what we call today a pretrib rapture.” Thomas Ice claims this in his *Pre-Trib Perspectives* publication (April 1995, p. 3). (On the same page Ice changes “our sins” in P-E’s “taken” quote to “their sins” — that is, the *world’s* sins — so he can have another reason for a pretrib rapture for the sinless (?) church!)

Response No. 3: Alexander says (p. 210) that “taken to the Lord” (which Demy/Ice equate with “draw” and “gathered”) really means “participate at least in some measure in beatitude.”

Demy/Ice avoid explaining the Catholic teaching of “beatitude” and give the false impression that this expression refers to physical removal from earth! But the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967, Vol. II, p. 195) states that “beatitude,” meaning “blessedness,” has to do with “the highest acts of virtue that can be performed in this life” — human action *on* earth and not rapture action *away from* earth!

And when Alexander outlines P-E’s order of end-time events (pp. 218-19), he shows that this ancient writer spoke of only one coming: the “Second Coming of Christ” *following* the “*tribulatio magna* lasting three and a half years”!

In the same way that some recent writers have created a Pseudo-Edwards, a Pseudo-Lacunza, a Pseudo-Macdonald, a Pseudo-Irving, and a Pseudo-Darby, Timothy Demy and Thomas Ice (inspired by Grant Jeffrey) have created a

Pseudo-Pseudo-Ephraem — a modern Pseudo-Ephraem that the ancient Pseudo-Ephraem wouldn't recognize!

Again I ask the same question: if pretrib dispensationalism can continue to cover up or distort the bizarre beginnings of its 165-year existence, why should anyone trust its interpretations of the Bible?

Last-Minute Bulletin. The ink has hardly dried on the Jeffrey/Demy/Ice claim regarding Pseudo-Ephraem. But already several pretrib leaders — including J. R. Church, Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye, Jim Combs, Chuck Missler, and Dave Hunt — have quickly, desperately, and publicly supported this new claim merely on the say-so of the original trio. Undoubtedly, many more repeaters will collusively jump on the same Medieval bandwagon.

APPENDIX F

“THOU SHALT NOT STEAL”

Stealing?

The appendix you're now reading has in mind *literary* stealing, commonly known as plagiarism. *Webster's New College Dictionary* defines plagiarism as “passing off as one's own” the “ideas” or “words” or “products” of someone else.

Writers who use the ideas or words of others without permission or without giving proper credit are plagiarists.

For starters, let's compare part of a recent Jack Van Impe article in his own publication (“The Moment After,” *Perhaps Today*, March/April, 2000, p. 5) with part of a Grant Jeffrey book (*Final Warning*, 1995, p. 306).

Van Impe wrote: “The early Christian writer and poet Ephraem the Syrian (who lived from A.D. 306 to 373) was a major theologian of the early Byzantine Eastern Church. To this day, his hymns and homilies are used in the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox and Middle Eastern Nestorian Churches. He also wrote a large number of commentaries that have never been translated into English.”

Match that with what Jeffrey had written earlier: “The early Christian writer and poet, Ephraem the Syrian, (who lived from A.D. 306 to 373) was a major theologian of the early Byzantine Eastern Church. . . . To this day, his hymns and homilies are used in the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox and Middle Eastern Nestorian Church. . . . he also wrote a

large number of commentaries that have never been translated into English.”

Nowhere did Van Impe even mention Jeffrey or his book. And it wasn’t the first time he had handled Jeffrey’s material in this manner!

(Interestingly, even though Paul Alexander — whom Jeffrey described as the “most authoritative” scholar on the early Byzantines — viewed “Pseudo-Ephraem” and not Ephraem the Syrian as the author of the manuscript in which Jeffrey claimed to find pretrib, Jeffrey, copied by Van Impe, continued to refer to only Ephraem the Syrian!)

My 1998 book *The Three R's* uncovered, among other things, the massive and embarrassing plagiarism in books authored by some leading prophecy writers, including C. C. Carlson, David Jeremiah, Hal Lindsey, and even the late Merrill Unger!

Additional similarities in print, equally shocking, have been discovered in recent days. On the following pages I will offer comparison quotes from some other influential prophecy books and let you decide who should wear the “guilty” label.

Jerry Falwell & Friends

Compare George Dollar’s *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (1973) with *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (1981), edited by Jerry Falwell with Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson:

Dollar, pp. 93-8:

“Harry Emerson Fosdick . . . was born near Buffalo, New York, on May 24, 1878. . . . he attended Colgate, where he . . . revolted against orthodox views. . . . at Colgate. . . came under the . . . influence of . . . William Newton Clarke. . . , transferring to Union Seminary and Columbia Univer-

Falwell et al, p. 104:

“Harry Emerson Fosdick . . . was born in Buffalo, New York, on May 24, 1878. He attended Colgate . . . where he revolted against . . . orthodox teachings. . . . At Colgate he was influenced by William Newton Clarke. . . transferred to Union Seminary and Columbia University. At Union he

Dollar, pp. 93-8 (Cont'd):

sity. . . . One major influence on Fosdick at Union was the stress on the social application He found the social gospel of Rauschenbusch . . . challenging. . . . From 1904 to 1915 he was pastor of the Baptist church at Montclair, New Jersey. . . . his sermons . . . on problem-solving . . . drew from . . . withing the Bible and outside. . . . From 1919 to 1925 he supplied the pulpit of First Presbyterian Church in New York. . . . In May, 1922, he preached a sermon entitled 'Shall the Fundamentalists Win?' . . . He resigned from First Presbyterian church. . . . From 1925 to 1930 Fosdick served the Park Avenue Baptist. . . . Rockefeller was willing to give a large sum for the erection of a new edifice, and by 1930 the very beautiful Riverside Church was ready [in] Morningside Heights in Manhattan. . . . Riverside provided a pulpit for Harry Emerson Fosdick. . . . The National Broadcasting Company was so impressed by his stature that it gave him free time on Sunday afternoon for 'National Vespers.'. . . He retired from Union Seminary and Riverside Church in 1946."

Dollar, pp. 217-218:

" . . . the Baptist Bible Fellowship . . . owes its origin to the ministry and inspiration of J. Frank Norris. . . . in the late 1940's serious ten-

Falwell et al, p. 104 (Cont'd):

was influenced by the importance of a social consciousness. . . . He was challenged by the influence of Rauschenbusch, who was the pioneer champion of the social gospel. His preaching . . . utilized the Bible and extrabiblical sources in dealing with problems. . . . From 1904 to 1915 Fosdick was pastor at the Baptist Church at Montclair, New Jersey. From 1919 to 1925 he supplied the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in New York. After his famous sermon in May 1922, 'Shall the Fundamentalists Win?' he was forced to resign from the Presbyterian Church. From 1925 to 1930 he served at Park Avenue Baptist. In 1930 a new church was erected and paid for by John D. Rockefeller: the Riverside Church in Morningside Heights in Manhattan. The church . . . provided the public forum for Harry Emerson Fosdick. His pulpit ministry was so impressive that the National Broadcasting Company allowed him free time on Sunday afternoon for the broadcast of the 'National Vespers.' Fosdick retired from Union Seminary and Riverside Church in 1946."

Falwell et al, pp. 126-7:

"Much of the vision and momentum of the Baptist Bible Fellowship came from the leadership of J. Frank Norris. During the late

Dollar, pp. 217-218 (Cont'd):
 sions arose in the [World Baptist Fellowship, and several of its younger pastors broke away. . . . Among these were G. Beauchamp Vick, John W. Rawlings, Noel Smith, W. E. Dowell, and Scotty Alexander. . . . Papers to incorporate a new school were taken out on June 29, 1950 . . . in Springfield, Missouri. . . . for the academic year 1971-1972 over two thousand were enrolled. . . . the printed voice of the BBF has been the *Baptist Bible Tribune* with its able and outspoken editor, Noel Smith. He has been especially effective in uncovering unbiblical teachings among Southern Baptists. He has been equally sharp in his criticisms of communism, the National and World Councils of Churches, and Modernism. . . . He has been openly against Billy Graham's evangelism. . . ."

Dollar, pp. 242-3:
 "Southwide Baptist Fellowship . . . of Fundamental Baptists in the Southeastern section of our nation owes its origin to a meeting of pastors in Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on March 20, 1956. . . . There were 147 charter members. . . . Its purpose was to provide a fellowship for men of Fundamental Baptist convictions. . . . Among the first members were such men as Lee Roberson, John R. Rice,

Falwell et al, pp. 126-7 (Cont'd):
 forties, many of the preachers [in the World Baptist Fellowship] began to experience disillusionment. . . . a number of men, including Vick, John W. Rawlings, Noel Smith, W. E. Dowell . . . and Scottie Alexander, left the World Baptist Fellowship and formed the Baptist Bible Fellowship. . . . On June 29 [1950] papers were taken out to open a new school, in Springfield, Missouri. . . . by 1970 more than 2,000 were enrolled. . . . the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, edited by Noel Smith. This served as the official publication for the newly formed BBF. Smith devoted his energies to such matters as error among Southern Baptists, dealing with communism, the National and World councils of churches, and modernism. Through the years he also dealt with the issues of Billy Graham's evangelism. . . ."

Falwell et al, pp.131-2:
 "One of the prominent fundamentalist influences in the Southeast is the Southwide Baptist Fellowship. It was founded on March 20, 1956, with 147 charter members at Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This organization was designed to provide fellowship for pastors of fundamentalist Baptist convictions. The early members of this group included Lee Roberson, John R. Rice, Harold B. Sightler, J.R.

Dollar, pp. 242-3 (Cont'd):

Harold B. Sightler, J. R. Faulkner, Wayne Van Gelderen, Norman G. Lemmons, Gene Arnold, Bob Gray, Bob Bevington, and John R. Waters. . . . Lee Roberson of Highland Park Baptist has held a commanding place of influence in the Southwide Fellowship because of the 33,000-member church he pastors and the growth of Tennessee Temple Schools . . . composed of a Bible college, a liberal arts college, and a seminary."

Falwell et al, pp. 131-2 (Cont'd):

Faulkner, Wayne Van Gelderen, Norman G. Lemmons, Gene Arnold, Bob Gray, Bob Bevington, and John R. Waters. . . . One of the leaders of this fellowship has been Lee Roberson of Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is pastor of the 33,000-member Highland Park Baptist Church and is founder of Tennessee Temple Schools. Currently Tennessee Temple University includes a Bible school, a liberal arts college, and a seminary."

Tim LaHaye

Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) followed by LaHaye's *The Beginning of the End* (1972):

Lindsey, p. 188:

"In the early centuries, the Christians had a word for greeting and departing; it was the word 'maranatha.'"

Lindsey, pp. 70-1:

"the Cossacks have always loved horses and have been recognized as producing the finest army of cavalry in the world. . . . the countries. . . . as part of this great army are already armed with weapons created and manufactured in Russia."

LaHaye, p. 12:

"'Maranatha' . . . gained popularity in the first century and became a common mode of greeting and parting."

LaHaye, p. 74:

"The Cossacks still boast of having the finest horseflesh in the world. . . . Russia . . . the supplier of weapons to future invaders of Israel, is today the leading manufacturer of weaponry."

John Walvoord's *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (1976) followed by LaHaye's *No Fear of the Storm* (1992):

Walvoord, p.12:

"the Alexandrian school of theology in Egypt [that tried to] harmonize systematic theology with Platonic philosophy."

LaHaye, p. 206:

"the Alexandrian school of theology from Egypt that seemed to merge biblical theology with Platonic philosophy."

Lindsey's *There's A New World Coming* (1973) followed by LaHaye's *Understanding the Last Days* (1998):

Lindsey, p. 280:

Evidently each person has a recording angel" (Lindsey also quoted Eccl. 12:14)

LaHaye, p. 191:

"It may be that each of us has a recording angel." (LaHaye also quoted Eccl. 12:14)

Lindsey, p. 281:

"The New Testament refers to the 'Book of Life' eight times, and although the Old Testament doesn't call it by that name, it refers three times to a book in which names are written. This book contains the name of every person born into the world. If by the time he dies, a person has not received God's provision of sacrifice to remove sin, then his name is blotted out of this 'Book of Life.'"

LaHaye, pp. 192, 194:

"The New Testament refers to the book of life eight different times, and although the Old Testament does not call it by that name, it does allude three times to a book in which names are written. . . . The book of life is that book in which the names of all people ever born into the world are written. If, at the time of a person's death, he has not called upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, his name is blotted out of the book of life."

Charles C. Ryrie

Compare Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) with Dallas Seminary Professor Charles C. Ryrie's *The Living End* (1976):

Lindsey, p. 82:

"a great and formidable boundary between the peoples east of it and those west of it . . . and is scarcely

Ryrie, p. 70:

"a formidable boundary between those who lived east and west of it. . . . scarcely fordable at any point

Lindsey, p.82 (Cont'd):

fordable anywhere or at any time . . . from three to twelve hundred yards wide, and from ten to thirty feet in depth" (From J. A. Seiss's *The Apocalypse* which Lindsey credited.)

Lindsey, pp. 84-85:

"the real sleeping giant of Asia was awakened . . . they went from the testing of a crude atomic bomb to the successful test firing of an H-bomb in two and one half years" (Part of this was a citation of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*.)

Compare Lindsey's *There's A New World Coming* (1973) with Ryrie's *The Living End* (1976):

Lindsey, pp.90-1:

"After a period of writing [a scribe] would stop, roll the parchment enough to cover his words, and seal the scroll at that point with wax. Then he would resume writing, stop again, roll the scroll, and add another seal. . . . it was to prevent unauthorized persons from tampering with the scroll or reading and revealing its contents. Only a 'worthy' person . . . could have legal access to the scroll's message. . . . when a Jewish family was required to forfeit its land and possessions through some distress, the property could not be permanently taken from them. Their losses were listed in a scroll and sealed seven times, the conditions necessary to purchase back the

Ryrie, p. 70 (Cont'd):

. . . or at any time. . . . From 300 to 1,200 yards wide and 10 to 30 feet deep" (Ryrie gave no credit to either source.)

Ryrie, p. 72:

"The Giant Comes to Life . . . She exploded her first atomic bomb in 1964, and tested her first H-bomb two and a half years later." (Ryrie gave no credit for any of this.)

Ryrie, pp. 38-9:

"After a scribe had finished writing a section of the scroll he would stop, roll up the scroll to that point, and seal it. Then he would begin again, stop, roll up the scroll, and affix another seal. In this way he prevented any unauthorized person from tampering with or divulging the contents of the scroll. Only a duly authorized person could break those seals. . . . When a Jewish family was forced to sell its property or possessions, the loss was listed on a scroll and sealed seven times. By law, the property could not be taken away from them permanently, so the scroll contained the record of the loss and what would have to be done in order to get the property back. When

land and possessions were written on the outside of the scroll. When a qualified redeemer could be found . . . the possession [was returned] to the original owner.” (Paraphrase of a W. A. Criswell work which Lindsey credited.)

a qualified person came along to redeem that property, then it was returned to the original owners.” (Ryrie again gave credit to no one.)

Paul Lee Tan

Compare Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) with Dallas Seminary Professor Paul Lee Tan’s *A Pictorial Guide to Bible Prophecy* (1991):

Lindsey p. 65:

“In discussing Tubal he said, ‘Tubal is the son of Rapheth [sic], founder of the Tibereni, a people dwelling on the Black sea to the west of the Moschi.’” (Credits Gesenius).

Lindsey, p. 67:

“All authorities agree on who Persia is today. It is modern Iran. . . . It would be much more difficult to move a large land army across the Caucasus Mountains that border Turkey, than the Elburz Mountains that border Iran. Iran’s general terrain is also much easier to cross than Turkey’s. Transportation, however, will be needed through both countries.”

Lindsey p. 69:

“Gomer . . . ‘settled on the north of the Black Sea, and then spread themselves southward and westward to the extremities of Europe.’” (Credits Young).

Tan, p. 111:

“*Tubal*, the fifth son of Japheth, was the founder of the Tibereni, a people dwelling on the Black Sea, west of the Moschi.” (Gives no credit).

Tan, p. 113:

“Most scholars agree that ancient Persia is today’s Iran. . . . It would be much more difficult to move a large land army across the Caucasus Mountains that border Turkey, than the Elburz Mountains that border Iran. Iran’s general terrain is also much easier to cross than Turkey’s, although both routes apparently will be used.”

Tan, p. 114:

“Gomer . . . settled on the north of the Black Sea and then spread south and west into eastern Europe.” (Gives no credit).

Lindsey, p. 70:

"... Ashkenaz, 'The Rheginians' and a map of the ancient Roman Empire places them in the area of modern Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany to the banks of the Danube River."

Lindsey, p. 70:

"... in rugged mountainous terrain, horses are still the fastest means of moving a large attacking force into battle zones. Isn't it a coincidence that such terrain stands between Russia and the Israeli?"

Lindsey, pp. 93-4:

"Charlemagne tried to do this in A.D. 800 ... was crowned by the Pope as Emperor Charles Augustus. ... Napoleon ... snatched the crown from the Pope and put it on himself. ... Hitler ... said his Third Reich would last a thousand years."

Lindsey, p.136:

"My dear friends in the congregation. Bless you for coming to church today. I know that many of you have lost loved ones in this unusual disappearance of so many people. However, I believe that God's judgment has come upon them for their continued dissension and quarreling with the great advances of the church in our century. Now that the reactionaries are removed, we can progress toward our great and glorious goal of uniting all mankind into a brotherhood of reconciliation and understanding."

Tan, p. 114:

"... Ashkenaz or 'The Rheginians,' which would place them in the area of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany (to the Danube River)."

Tan, p. 114:

"... horses are still the fastest and surest means of transporting troops, light and heavy artillery, and field equipment over mountainous terrain. And the terrain between the king of the north and Israel is mountainous."

Tan, p.109:

"Charlemagne in A.D. 800 tried it, and he was crowned by the Pope as Emperor Charles Augustus. ... Napoleon crowned himself. ... Hitler said his Third Reich would last a thousand years."

Tan, p.68:

"My dear friends. Bless you for listening to me. I know that many of you have lost loved ones in this unusual disappearance of so many people. However, we believe it was God's judgment on them, for their uncooperation and division on the majestic advances of Society and the Church on earth. Now that the separatists are removed, let us really unite in the great goal of universal brotherhood, love and peace on earth."

Well, there you have it — just a fraction of the sloppy and devious scholarship I've run into lately.

If you're interested in obtaining my book *The Three R's*, which uncovers the huge amount of plagiarism in some of the leading pretrib works on both sides of the Atlantic since the year 1830, call (800) 967-7345 for more information.

Do you still believe that the any-moment, pretribulation rapture view inspires *holy* living?

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About the Author: Born 1932 of Scotch/English descent, Dave MacPherson is a natural for British historical research. His calling was journalism. Receiving a BA in English, 1955, he spent 26 years as a newsman reporting and filming many notable events and persons, presidents and dignitaries. His wife, the former Wanda Rader of Kansas City, has for years been his "research partner." Through these many years Dave has been honing a delightful writing style, a flair for journalistic sleuthing, and a meticulous research accuracy which, for over a quarter century, has been focused on the history of pretrib rapturism and now culminates in *The Rapture Plot*.

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